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Executive Board of the United Nations Children's Fund

Report on the first, second and annual sessions of 2008

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Report on the first, second and annual sessions of 2008

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Note

Symbols of United Nations documents are composed of capital letters combined with figures.

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Part one
First regular session of 2008

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 29 January to 1 February 2008

I. Organization of the session

A. Election of officers

1. The Executive Board elected as President H.E. Mr. Anders Lidén (Sweden), and as Vice-Presidents Mrs. Ami Diallo (Mali); H.E. Mr. Hamidon Ali (Malaysia); H.E. Mr. Mihnea Ioan Motoc (Romania); and H.E. Mr. Jorge Skinner-Klée (Guatemala).

B. Opening statements

2. In his statement, outgoing President H.E. Mr. Javier Loayza Barea underscored several priorities: policies that ensure the inclusion of all children; development efforts at the community level; and joint and coherent efforts by the United Nations agencies and other partners. He praised UNICEF for being at the forefront of the United Nations system in achieving results for children, noting that UNICEF had many reasons to be proud of its work in ensuring that all children can reach their maximum potential.

3. The President of the Executive Board for 2008 underlined recent global achievements for children, including a reduction in under-five mortality, an increase in school enrolment, and a reduction in the gender gap. He urged the Executive Board members to help to maximize the contribution of UNICEF to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. He encouraged an even closer cooperation between the secretariat and the Executive Board. He also recognized the crucial contribution of National Committees for UNICEF in resource mobilization and increasing awareness of the work of the organization.

4. The Executive Director, referring to the recent tragedy in Algiers, underlined the importance of staff safety and security. She highlighted achievements made for children contributing to attainment of the Millennium Development Goals as outlined in the UNICEF 2008 *State of the World's Children* report and in the stocktaking report *Progress for Children: World Fit for Children Statistical Review*, published by UNICEF in 2007 for the high-level commemorative event for the Special Session on Children. She underlined the importance partnerships for children, credible data and working with other agencies to improve efficiency and the delivery of results. She introduced and welcomed two newly appointed senior staff members: Saad Houry, Deputy Executive Director, and Bernt Aasen, Chief of Staff.

C. Adoption of the agenda

5. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2008/1) for the session.

6. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 47 observer delegations, including 5 United Nations bodies, 2 intergovernmental organizations and 4 non-governmental organizations (NGOS).

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. UNICEF child protection strategy

7. The Chief of Child Protection, presented the draft UNICEF child protection strategy (E/ICEF/2008/5), emphasizing that protection for children was their human right and essential for improved development outcomes. The strategic intent of the strategy was to help to strengthen the capacity of Governments to respect and fulfil children's right to protection from violence, exploitation and abuse, and to help mobilize communities, partners and children themselves to reinforce a culture of child protection in all societies. The strategy presented five main lines of action, including building national protection systems, supporting social change, child protection in conflict and disaster, evidence-building and knowledge management, and convening and catalysing. She identified several challenges, including the slow change in laws and practices and identifying the costs of child protection.

8. Delegations praised the strategy for being clear, concise, thorough and strategic, and several commended UNICEF for the inclusive and consultative process in the strategy's development, which included Member States and NGOs. The leadership role of UNICEF in child protection was emphasized. Child protection was recognized as being critical to the survival and well-being of children as well as for achieving the Millennium Development Goals, and UNICEF should continue to strengthen its efforts in this area. The strategy should fully support the implementation of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) for 2006-2009 and the creation of stronger linkages with other sectors of UNICEF work. Child protection should be reflected as a priority in the allocation of resources. Delegations noted the need for the strategic use of human resources, which should involve building the capacity of staff to acquire the needed skills and to meet the high demands required by child protection. Challenges regarding staffing should be better communicated. It was also recommended that the strategy be widely disseminated, with regular updates provided to the Executive Board.

9. The integration of the recommendations of the Violence Study in the document was appreciated. However, it was noted that the General Assembly resolution calling for the establishment of a position of Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children was not directly referred to in the document. Delegations encouraged close coordination between UNICEF and the Special Representative, once appointed.

10. Several speakers commented that gender and the particular vulnerabilities and needs of girls could be highlighted more prominently. Gender should be mainstreamed into all programmes, as gender discrimination was a root cause of violence. This should include the application of gender analysis and the collection of gender-disaggregated data. Some delegations added that sexual and reproductive rights were not mentioned in the strategy despite their close link to the Millennium Development Goals and health outcomes.

11. It was also noted that all children should benefit from protection, including girls, children with mental and physical disability and children affected by armed conflict. Several delegations requested

that the strategy should include the situation of children under foreign occupation. The need for further discussion on the issues raised in the Machel Strategic Review was noted, as indicated in General Assembly resolution 62/141 of 18 December 2007.

12. The importance of child participation and the role of children as promoters of social change, including in government decision-making, monitoring and evaluation, were highlighted. Partnerships were critical to the successful implementation of the strategy, and the roles of civil society, the private sector and UNICEF National Committees in implementing the strategy could be better clarified. In addition it was requested that references to coordination with national Governments be improved in the section related to emergencies.

13. Other highlighted issues included the impact of migration on children, juvenile justice, the rule of law agenda, the importance of birth registration, and trafficking and its consequences for children. The important role of the family, including in protecting children from outside violence, the need for positive parenting programmes and permanent family placement for children as an alternative to long-term care were mentioned.

14. Several speakers emphasized that the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Millennium Development Goals and *A World Fit for Children* were documents adopted by Member States and should be the basis for UNICEF work. While some delegations supported the strategy's references to United Nations coherence and the humanitarian cluster approach, others noted that the strategy's implementation should be consistent with ongoing inter-governmental processes related to those areas. The Paris Principles were a non-binding document and should be viewed as such. In addition, it was noted that some terms used in the strategy should be adjusted to ensure alignment with general definitions contained in relevant United Nations decisions and resolutions.

15. Several delegations and NGO representatives underlined the importance of improved protection for children in humanitarian emergencies, including for internally displaced persons and refugees.

16. The Chair of the Committee on the Rights of the Child, who attended the Executive Board session, noted that the Convention on the Rights of the Child should be integrated into the strategy and that State Party reporting should be taken into consideration. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees called for greater leadership by UNICEF in protection for children in natural disasters and acknowledged the reference to statelessness made in the strategy. International Save the Children, SOS Kinderdorf, and the Christian Children's Fund expressed their support for the strategy.

17. The Chief of Child Protection replied that UNICEF child protection work covered all children and that no particular groups were singled out in the strategy. She stressed that UNICEF was committed at the highest level to implementing the Violence Study's recommendations and working with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, once appointed. She acknowledged that child protection work was intensive in terms of staff and knowledge required and that a corporate learning strategy should be developed for all staff. Gender

has a central role in child protection issues and is mainstreamed in all programmes. The role of boys and men in bringing about change was important, as was the collection of gender-disaggregated data.

18. The Executive Director, in her concluding remarks on the discussion, stated that child protection was central to the work of UNICEF and underlined the importance of prevention. The inclusion of child protection for the first time in data collected through the multiple indicator cluster surveys was a crucial step in ensuring reliable data in this area.

19. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/1 (see annex).

B. Update on children in armed conflict: oral report

20. Deputy Executive Director Hilde Frafjord Johnson highlighted the significance of the issue, and achievements of the past decade, particularly those of 2007. Manuel Fontaine, Senior Advisor, Child Protection, presented the update on children in armed conflict. He outlined milestones in 2007 that had an impact on the agenda for this issue, highlighting the key role of UNICEF in three major initiatives: (a) the Paris Conference, "Free Children from War," and its outcome documents; (b) the Machel Strategic Review ("Machel + 10"); and (c) the progress made in the monitoring and reporting mechanism under United Nations Security Council resolution 1612 (2005). He discussed several implications of these initiatives for the organization and noted that children in armed conflict would continue to be an integral part of UNICEF child protection efforts.

21. Radhika Coomaraswamy, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, spoke of complementary efforts between the Office of the Special Representative and UNICEF, drawing particular attention to the collaboration on monitoring and reporting mechanisms and the Machel Strategic Review. She drew attention to the upcoming Security Council Open Debate on Children and Armed Conflict on 12 February 2008, and stressed the importance of ending gender-based violence. She stated her support for including an annex on this issue in the annual report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict.

22. Many delegations commended UNICEF and the Office of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict for their commitment and efforts, and stated their support for the protection of children through various initiatives. Delegations acknowledged progress on the development of norms and standards such as the Paris Commitments, as documented in Machel Strategic Review report, *Children and Conflict in a Changing World*. Several speakers expressed support for this process, including the follow-up biannual working meetings, and encouraged more Governments to adopt the Paris Commitments. Several delegations requested that priority be given to the implementation of the norms and standards. One speaker questioned the effectiveness of the norms and standards and asked whether the monitoring and reporting mechanisms for Security Council resolution 1612 adequately addressed violations, including those involving gender-based violence. A number of delegations expressed concern about the fact that the Paris Principles were not legally binding and had not yet been adopted by the United Nations.

23. Other highlighted issues included a focus on strengthening national systems; building capacities, particularly for monitoring and reporting; the need for increasing efforts in peace-building and peacemaking; and ending gender-based violence and ensuring more support for reintegration. A few delegations called for more strategic national and international partnerships with other United Nations entities and the private sector, and improving collaboration mechanisms. One speaker requested a more consultative process for the Machel Strategic Review and further discussions on the proposed recommendations and issues identified in the 2007 Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (General Assembly report A/62/228), as was indicated in General Assembly resolution 62/141.

24. Many delegations expressed concern that despite progress, there were still numerous gaps in protection. The issue of inadequate resources and short-term funding was also raised. Delegations asked to be kept informed and reiterated that the protection of children in conflict situations should be a priority.

25. In response, the panellists stressed the importance of partnerships and the fact that UNICEF is making a concerted effort to collaborate with various national and international organizations, including the World Bank. All children require protection and all violations against children will receive attention. Norms and standards required a multitude of actions and inputs, including political negotiations and political will, particularly that of States and non-State actors, and programme action. The Paris Principles required greater endorsement and were developed for practitioners based on operational best practices. Several challenges were also acknowledged, including persistent violations, particularly among non-State actors.

C. Biennial support budget for 2008-2009

26. The Executive Board had before it the proposed biennial support budget for 2008-2009 (E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.1) and the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.2). The budget was introduced by Deputy Executive Director Omar Abdi, and the Comptroller, who highlighted the fact that the format and approach of results-based budgeting had been jointly developed with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and through several consultations with the Executive Board. The main shift was from a presentation based on location and inputs to one based on results. This results-based budgeting was to remain a work in progress and would continue to be improved through collaborative efforts, with special attention given to presenting smarter indicators and targets in the next biennium, 2010-2011. Reporting back on the key performance indicators would also involve additional consultations with the Executive Board and further adjustments and refinements to the results-based budget format.

27. The Deputy Executive Director explained efforts to mainstream the security costs in the field and, therefore, the centrally managed security costs proposal was maintained at the same level as that of 2006-2007, i.e. at $26.2 million. However, following the tragic event in Algiers, UNICEF needed to look at possible exceptional measures required in consultation with the Department of Safety and

Security in the United Nations. UNICEF would come back to the Executive Board during the course of the biennium if an additional specific allocation were required.

28. Delegations commended the secretariat for the improvements on the presentation of the budget document and for the informal pre-session briefings on the budget. However, disappointment was expressed that Executive Board members were not given the opportunity to comment on earlier versions of the budget document. Considering that the biennial support budget is of strategic interest to the Board, UNICEF was requested to ensure early consultation with Board members on future biennial support budgets. Several delegations appreciated the progress made and requested UNICEF to continue further harmonization and improvement of the methodology for results-based budgeting in close collaboration with other United Nations funds and programmes. Several delegations also requested that UNICEF provide proposed budget estimates by cost category for major objectives of expenditures as an annex to the next biennial support budget document. UNICEF was requested to present the next biennial support budget, for 2010-2011, at the Executive Board's second regular session of 2009.

29. Delegations appreciated the progressive decrease of the biennial support budget as a proportion of resources (from 14.2 per cent in 2006-2007 to 11.9 per cent in 2008-2009) and encouraged UNICEF to continue efforts in this regard.

30. Concerns were expressed about the fact that the percentage of other resources increased at a much higher rate than the cost recoveries to the biennial support budget, and that consequently there was a risk of regular resources subsidizing projects funded by other resources. The secretariat clarified that the cost-recovery methodology that UNICEF and most other United Nations organizations applied was based upon incremental costs, as outlined in the cost-recovery policy approved by the Executive Board (E/ICEF/2003/AB/L.1 and E/ICEF/2006/AB/L.4). This methodology made a distinction in the support costs between fixed costs - at headquarters, regional and country offices - and variable costs that are driven by the volume of programme activities. On an incremental cost basis, the base recovery rate of 7 per cent approved by the Executive Board in June 2006 (decision 2006/7) was considered appropriate at this time. The Comptroller also said that there was an ongoing United Nations-wide review of cost recovery under the auspices of the High Level Committee on Management, with participation from UNICEF, and that the Executive Board would be apprised of progress and outcomes of the review.

31. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/2 (see annex).

D. Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2008 work plan and budget for private fundraising

32. Following an introduction by Deputy Executive Director Hilde Frafjord Johnson, the Director of Private Fundraising and Partnerships (PFP) presented the report (E/ICEF/2008/AB.L.3). Several delegations commended PFP and the National Committees for UNICEF for the positive results attained in 2007, and thanked the Director for the significant effort that had gone into the restructuring of PFP.

33. Several delegations noted that with the adoption of the new structure, PFP funding will come from two sources, the offset and support budgets. The delegations expressed the view that a consolidated overview of PFP expenditures would be helpful for the Executive Board to better evaluate overall performance and results.

34. One delegation commented that in the past, actual sales for cards and products had been lower than forecasted. A question was also raised regarding the ongoing cards and products review, and whether the findings would be shared with the Executive Board.

35. A question was also raised about the implementation of International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS), and the eventual impact upon National Committees. The importance of oversight and accountability was highlighted, as audits had identified gaps in monitoring of revenue. A question was also brought up about the management of economic risks and challenging market conditions in the future.

36. In response, the Deputy Executive Director noted the organization's commitment to governance and oversight, and highlighted the appointment of a financial advisor in the Office of the Executive Director, and the ongoing IPSAS implementation.

37. The PFP Director responded that to facilitate financial evaluation of PFP activity, a consolidated overview would be presented to the Executive Board. UNICEF was strongly committed to ensuring accountability and oversight of resources, and the Executive Board was advised that while certain measures had already been implemented in response to audit comments, the budget included resources to further strengthen this important area. Economic developments would be closely monitored, as would expenditures, to minimize financial risk to PFP.

38. The Director recognized the issues related to the cards and products business, and advised that the business review would be completed during the first half of 2008 and a report made to the Office of the Executive Director.

39. Regarding IPSAS and the National Committees, the Director noted that work was ongoing and a number of potential impacts identified. He specified that the National Committees had been, and would continue to be, involved in the IPSAS implementation process.

40. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/3 (see annex).

E. UNICEF evaluation policy

41. Deputy Executive Director Omar Abdi and the Director of Evaluation presented the report (E/ICEF/2008/4). Expressing their appreciation for the comprehensiveness of the policy, delegations said that the evaluation policy was a good step towards further strengthening the evaluation function in UNICEF. A strong and well-articulated evaluation policy was of utmost importance for ensuring the independence and credibility of evaluations, which were particularly crucial in a context of decentralized roles and responsibilities, and for measuring and improving performance at all levels.

The management's response to the 2007 peer review was considered a clear road map, and UNICEF had already made commendable progress in the development of a coherent evaluation function.

42. It was also recognized that the evaluation function was an important counterpart to oversight mechanisms, such as audits, inspections and investigations; for informing and enriching strategic decisions; and for helping to instil a culture of learning and improvement at all levels of the organization. It was also suggested that the policy could have established a clearer link to audit, as a way to improve programme effectiveness, and that the guiding principles could have given more emphasis to accountability and oversight.

43. While appreciation was expressed for the consistency of the proposed policy with the United Nations Evaluation Group (UNEG) Norms and Standards for evaluation, UNICEF was urged to be rigorous and proactive in institutionalizing these principles throughout the organization. The policy was also commended for referring to the need for evaluators to have basic skills in human rights and gender analysis.

44. Several delegations suggested reinforcing the management responses to evaluations at all levels in an internal directive, as a way to improve learning and performance. Similarly, it was suggested that UNICEF establish a solid tracking system for monitoring the implementation of management responses and for contributing information to underpin periodic reporting to the senior management and the Executive Board.

45. Regarding the funding target of 3-5 per cent for evaluation, it was suggested that the target should not detract from the implementation of regular programmes and projects, nor should it excessively burden Member States. UNICEF was requested to consider the possible need to review the directive, established more than 14 years ago, to ensure that support for programme evaluations was appropriate and well balanced. Questions were also raised on the proportions of expenditures that went to evaluations, studies and research, and on the criteria for determining priorities. Several delegations expressed support for the proper planning of programme, joint thematic, and project evaluations and encouraged UNICEF to adopt an approach whereby all programmes would be evaluated within a five-year cycle. Concern was expressed over the fact that strategic policy and programme evaluations continued to rely to some extent on funding from other sources within the organization, instead of the allocation of core resources to the Evaluation Office. This would allow the development, implementation and review of a credible and relevant evaluation work plan, endorsed by senior management and supported by the Executive Board, and would ensure independence, credibility and quality.

46. In response, the Director of Evaluation explained that appropriate funding would follow from better planning of evaluation. Regarding the criteria used for selecting evaluations, the MTSP guided the selection of global evaluations, and the choice was presented to the Executive Board. At the country level, the integrated monitoring and evaluation plan set the priorities in light of the strategic intent of the programme of cooperation and in consultation with national authorities and partners. At the regional level, the regional strategy and plan guided the selection of evaluations selected by the Regional Management Teams.

47. Delegations welcomed the policy's commitment to support programme countries in evaluating their own programmes, to contribute to the strengthening of evaluation capacity in the countries, and to strengthen and increase UNICEF evaluation capacity at regional and country levels. Steps taken to strengthen the "evaluation culture" and to establish the United Nations Evaluation Development Group for Asia and the Pacific were also welcomed.

48. As the organization was moving "upstream" in its activities, UNICEF was encouraged to develop and adopt new instruments to assess and evaluate its contribution.

49. UNICEF, as a learning organization, was urged to ensure proactively that evaluation results - together with management responses - were accessible and shared broadly with programme countries, practitioners, UNICEF management, and the Executive Board. The Director of Evaluation reminded delegations that, since June 2002, UNICEF had released all evaluation reports as a matter of policy, and this was mentioned in the proposed policy.

50. Delegations stressed the importance of implementing the policy effectively throughout the organization. The commitment to evaluation must be translated into action and become a strong part of the culture of UNICEF at all levels. Delegations also indicated that they looked forward to receiving updates on progress in the implementation of the evaluation policy. UNICEF was encouraged to put in place a performance measurement framework that included concrete results, indicators, resources and responsibilities in order to monitor the implementation of the policy and track results and successes. The policy should also help to strengthen the quality of regional reports on midterm reviews and major evaluations.

51. Comments were made on the process to develop the evaluation policy, which could have been more consultative.

52. The policy could have been more consistent with that of sister agencies, thereby facilitating a One United Nations approach globally and at country level. UNICEF was invited to take account of the interest and numerous comments from members of the Executive Board in the policy's implementation and future reviews. In response, the Deputy Executive Director said that an Executive Directive would be issued on the evaluation system, reflecting also the elements introduced in the decision. Delegations requested a review of the policy at the second regular session of 2009.

53. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/4 (see annex).

F. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

Approval of revised country programme documents (CPDs)

54. The President stated that in accordance with decisions 2002/4 and 2006/19, the Executive Board had commented on the draft CPDs and had approved the aggregate indicative budgets for 14 country programmes at the second regular session of 2007. The draft CPDs were then revised, taking into account, as appropriate, comments made by delegations during that session, and a summary

results matrix was added. The revised CPDs were posted on the UNICEF website within six weeks of the discussion of the drafts at the second regular session. The revised CPDs were to be approved by the Executive Board at the current session on a no-objection basis, unless five members had informed the secretariat in writing of their wish to bring any country programme before the Board. The secretariat had not received any such requests, and therefore, the country programmes were approved for Colombia, Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Mexico, Nepal, Nicaragua, Pacific Island multi-country, Rwanda, Somalia and Togo.

55. Following the adoption of the draft CPDs, the representative of Colombia stated that the new country programme accords with the Government's core priorities such as the early childhood policy, improvement of national services related to protection and prevention, and juvenile justice. Referring to recent trends in the allocation of resources for Colombia and for middle-income countries, the representative urged UNICEF and the Executive Board to bear in mind the major challenges faced by these countries in the elimination of disparities, which might require a reassessment of the mechanisms by which resources were allocated.

56. The representative of Nicaragua said the country programme takes into consideration national priorities to fight poverty and encourage social development, especially education. The programme was developed in cooperation with the Government, donors and civil society.

57. The representative of Mexico pointed out that the country programme accords with national priorities, especially education and protection of children against violence and exploitation.

Recommendation for additional regular resources for approved country programmes

58. The recommendation (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.2) was introduced by the Director, Programmes.

59. One delegation raised a concern that the changing criteria for the allocation of regular resources would adversely affect Latin American and middle-income countries, where technical cooperation with UNICEF was important to ensure effective long-term policies that would reduce social disparities affecting children. The delegation called for a transparent process involving consultation with Member States and stated that any potential changes in rules of the allocation of core resources should not compromise the universal nature of UNICEF work.

60. Another delegation stated that UNICEF work should be more extensive, universal and representative. The recent decision to reduce regular resource funding for some Member States could have a negative impact on the implementation of country programmes and make it difficult to meet targets. Before reducing funding in core resources, UNICEF must analyse the possible impact on countries in full consultation with Member States. Consideration should be given to the challenges facing these countries in meeting all internationally agreed commitments.

61. In response, the Director of Programmes clarified that the agreed approaches for the allocation of regular resources were not changed; the application of the criteria approved by the Executive Board had aligned previous imbalances. Adjusting the resource allocation to follow the Executive Board-

approved criteria does not mean that UNICEF will exit from a country. As countries move towards certain benchmark targets, a discussion will take place on the future of programmes in these countries before a proposal is presented to the Executive Board. It was important to look at total resources: the changes in question refer to regular resources; there are also other resources to be taken into consideration. He reaffirmed the commitment of UNICEF to support countries in the development and implementation of policies to address disparities now and in the future.

62. The Executive Board approved decision 2008/5 (see annex).

Recommendation for additional other resources for approved country programmes

63. The report (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.3) was introduced by the Director, Programme, and approved without comment.

64. The Executive Board approved decision 2008/6 (see annex).

Intercountry programmes

65. The report (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.1 and E/ICEF/2008/P/L.1/Corr.1) was introduced by the Director, Programme, and approved without comment.

66. The Executive Board approved decision 2008/7 (see annex).

G. Pledging event

67. The Executive Director opened the ninth pledging conference by expressing her appreciation for the participation of Governments, National Committees for UNICEF and the private sector, and for their support to UNICEF. She noted that the ability of UNICEF to work effectively with national Governments and other partners depended on donors' contributions.

68. Overall Government contributions to UNICEF increased from $725 million in 2000 to $1,735 million in 2007. In terms of regular resources, preliminary figures showed that UNICEF received $538 million from donor Governments in 2007, compared with $465 million in 2006.

69. Including pledges received during the United Nations Pledging Conference in November 2007 as well as pledges received outside pledging events, UNICEF received pledges for 2008 regular resources in the amount of $383.8 million (compared with $260.3 million in 2007) from 48 Governments. This corresponded to 69 per cent of the financial medium-term plan target of $554 million.

70. Twenty donors increased their pledge from 2007 in local currency: Australia, Austria, Bhutan, China, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand and Turkey. Returning donors were Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador,

Islamic Republic of Iran, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lesotho, Malawi, Maldives and Uruguay. Several major donors were not able to announce pledges due to the incompatibility of their fiscal years.

H. Annual report to the Economic and Social Council

71. The report (E/ICEF/2008/3) was introduced by the Director of Governance, United Nations and Multilateral Affairs. She also presented a report on the activities of the Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) that were relevant to UNICEF (E/ICEF/2008/6).

72. Delegations commended the annual report, which they found comprehensive and objective. They thanked UNICEF for its diligent work and took note of progress in a number of areas, including development results, improved private and public partnerships, increased coherence within the United Nations system, and South-South cooperation. One delegation underscored the expectation of continued in-depth and regular updates on UNICEF work, including progress achieved and obstacles encountered. Several delegations expressed particular appreciation for the continued efforts to respond to small- and large-scale emergencies by UNICEF staff at national, regional and headquarters levels.

73. Concern was raised over the amount of funding contributed to the core budget of UNICEF. While thematic funding was less tied than traditional other resource funding, it was a complementary funding modality and should not be substituted for core funding. A number of delegations appealed to Executive Board members to increase core contributions and to guarantee predictable resources so that effective delivery of UNICEF programmes could be ensured. Predictability and long-term commitment of funds allowed for a more consistent focus on programmes with fewer distractions. One speaker requested further information on how UNICEF prioritizes the allocation of funds provided in a loosely or fully unearmarked manner to respond to humanitarian crisis.

74. A number of delegations underscored that coherent and effective programming is necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, which remain an utmost priority, by 2015. One delegation highlighted the work that still needs to be done in education, encouraging all relevant parties, including donor countries, to help UNICEF to fulfil its mandate in a timely and effective manner. Another delegation underscored the need for support to national Governments and for enhanced partnerships with key stakeholders, such as the World Bank, to promote and achieve child-related goals. UNICEF needed to think creatively and expand its ability to work with all partners who can help accelerate progress for children.

75. A number of delegations commented on UNICEF work in the context of the triennial comprehensive policy review, emphasizing the role of capacity-building under national leadership, and of using national expertise in the context of capacity building.

76. One speaker, addressing the issue of climate change, noted the efforts and planned activities of UNICEF, including the development of a strategy to promote healthy environments for children. Noting the close relationship between climate change and disaster reduction, the speaker encouraged UNICEF to develop a common strategy or set of actions to address both.

77. A couple of delegations noted the recent increase in coherence among United Nations funds and programmes and took note of the active role of UNICEF in supporting 'delivering as one' initiatives. The importance of further streamlining and the reduction of transaction costs to contribute to a more effective United Nations system was underlined. Increased coherence in all areas of programming would benefit all areas of work, including operations and funding.

78. One delegation referred to under-funded emergencies and noted that the Central Emergency Response Fund had addressed the funding issue in a significant way. However, the lack of common definitions for fundamental humanitarian terms made it difficult to arrive at a common understanding of needs during emergencies. Another delegation suggested two ways to reduce transaction costs: moving away from a project-based approach to a more integrated programme-based approach, and limiting the percentage that United Nations agencies are allowed to keep when they are channelling funding to NGOs to implement projects.

79. A number of delegations expressed their appreciation for UNICEF efforts to strengthen gender mainstreaming and emphasized that it is crucial to ensure that girls and boys have equal access to rights and are equally protected from all forms of violence. To further strengthen the process of gender mainstreaming, UNICEF must focus on the process of gathering gender-disaggregated data. A greater emphasis must also be placed on data quality and data-gathering through an approach that is sensitive to human rights and gender, as this is essential for results-oriented programme planning. A couple of delegations praised UNICEF for the number of women serving at senior levels and expressed their hope that this upward trend would continue.

80. One speaker noted the progress made in the area of South-South cooperation and underscored that UNICEF needs to have predictable resources to promote more such collaboration.

81. Two delegations commended UNICEF for its work and commitment to children's rights, confirmed at the commemorative high-level plenary meeting on follow-up to the outcome of the Special Session on Children, and related events, held in December 2007.

82. The Executive Board took note of the report, which will be submitted, together with a summary of comments made during the discussion, to the Economic and Social Council for consideration at its 2008 substantive session. The Board also took note of the report on the JIU.

I. Other matters

83. Deputy Executive Director Saad Houry gave a brief summary of the process for the midterm review of the MTSP, to be presented at the 2008 second regular session.

84. A special event took place in which the First Lady of Panama, Mrs. Vivian Fernández de Torrijos, was recognized as an advocate for the human rights and dignity of children with disabilities, and their families.

J. Closing statements by the Executive Director and the President

85. The Executive Director announced the retirement of Comptroller Terry Brown, Director of Evaluation Jean Quesnel and Director of Programme Division Alan Court, thanking them for their many years of service to UNICEF. She also announced the appointments of Nicholas Alipui as Director of Programme and Louis-Georges Arsenault as Director of Emergency Programmes.

86. She cited the critical importance of evaluation to the work of UNICEF, saying that UNICEF was expanding monitoring and evaluation and was building evaluation goals, benchmarks and timetables into programmes. She reiterated the centrality of child protection to UNICEF and said that UNICEF would continue its work upholding the rights of children and protecting them from abuse and exploitation. She also thanked all those who had pledged funds to UNICEF for their support and for their confidence in the work of UNICEF. The Executive Director stated the need to further discuss with the Executive Board the implications of the decision regarding timing of the biennial support budget (decision 2008/2).

87. The President, in closing the session, noted the important work accomplished, including the adoption of the biennial support budget for 2008-2009 and the UNICEF evaluation policy. He noted the good atmosphere for reaching consensus and expressed confidence that agreement would be reached on the child protection strategy. Finally, he stressed the importance of maintaining the non-political nature of the sessions and focusing on the work to be accomplished.

III. Joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA and WFP

88. This chapter, originally submitted as an addendum to the report of the UNICEF Executive Board on its first regular session of 2008 is a summary of the discussions that took place during the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP/UNFPA and WFP, held from 29 January to 1 February 2008. The text was prepared by the secretariats of the funds and programmes and approved by the Presidents of the three Executive Boards.

A. Progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals

89. The President of the UNICEF Executive Board invited the Deputy Executive Director to introduce the background paper and discussion on behalf of UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA and WFP. The Deputy Executive Director highlighted the uneven picture of progress given by recent data and said that a collective sense of urgency was needed if the Millennium Development Goals were to be met.

90. The Coordinator of the Technical Department of the Poverty Reduction Strategic Plan of the Ministry of Economy, Industry and Trade of the Government of Mali and the United Nations Resident Coordinator in Malawi shared country perspectives on how progress could be further scaled up and accelerated under national leadership.

91. In the discussion that followed, several delegations noted progress made but expressed concern that several countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, were not on track.

92. Delegations made the following recommendations to accelerate progress: emphasize Government leadership and national ownership as well as increased support from multilateral organizations in scaling up efforts; take more 'bottom-up' approaches so that marginalized groups benefit from scaling-up; ensure the availability of United Nations staff to support country efforts; reach out to the private sector and non-governmental organizations; and encourage South-South cooperation in the sharing and implementation of good practices. More attention should be given to addressing debt relief for poor countries, the fulfilment of aid promises by donor countries, unequal trade relations, gender inequality and the degradation of the environment.

93. A number of delegations recommended a greater focus on least developed countries, especially as demographic changes, economic growth, job creation, security, and a strong international response to conflicts and climate change can impact progress. More than just income factors should be used to classify countries so that efforts can focus on disparity-reduction, especially in middle-income countries. Also recommended was a more comprehensive assessment of progress towards Goal 8, including private funds and new donors.

94. In response, the panellists described country-level efforts to overcome challenges in achieving the Goals, including more comprehensive poverty-reduction programmes, anti- corruption efforts and capacity development. It was suggested that greater attention be paid to the migration of skilled personnel from low-income to industrialized countries; to sustaining gains in food production; and to ensuring quality education. International support needed to be more predictable so that recipient countries could improve their planning. The United Nations should place the Millennium Development Goals at the centre of its work in a coherent way, ensure quality support to countries and advocate for more resources to be given to Governments that demonstrate commitment to the Goals.

95. The Deputy Executive Director of UNICEF recommended a focus on policy change; on data collection, analysis and dissemination, particularly concerning disparities; and on population groups that are excluded and affected by conflict. Acceleration efforts should focus, even beyond 2015, on challenges associated with sanitation, quality education, and birth registration, among others.

B. Feedback from the 'delivering as one' pilots

Part one

96. The President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board invited the UNFPA Executive Director to introduce the item on Feedback from the 'delivering as one' pilots on behalf of the four agencies. The Executive Director underscored that the session was focused on hearing from the Member States, including those participating in the pilots. Highlighting key points from the stocktaking exercise, she noted that the feedback from the pilots showed that the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) formed the foundation of the one United Nations programme and derived from national development priorities. Joint programming and programmes had received positive reviews. Also, the strategic alignment of United Nations support to national development would reduce duplication and transaction costs, and the initiative's overall direction was positive.

97. The Minister of Integration of Albania noted that the ability to align the work of the United Nations family in Albania to the unique national priority of accession to the European Union had been one of the key achievements to date. She emphasized the importance of government leadership in selecting which agencies, given their comparative advantages, had a key role to play in supporting national goals. She underscored that the overall impression of her Government was very positive concerning 'delivering as one'.

98. The Secretary-General, Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning of Rwanda, highlighted his Government's positive experience with the pilot. He stressed the importance of close linkage between national planning instruments and the UNDAF to ensure a strong United Nations programme in the country and noted that the pilot initiative was directly related to the commitments in the Paris Declaration.

99. Delegations from the United Republic of Tanzania, Mozambique, Uruguay, and Viet Nam (countries participating in the pilots) underscored that national ownership and leadership were essential for the initiative to work. They emphasized that each country was unique and there was no "one size fits all" approach. They expressed cautious optimism about improved United Nations coherence and increased linkages between national priorities and United Nations programmes. They noted that the 'delivering as one' process was labour-intensive and that it was too early to assess development impact.

100. Key issues raised during the subsequent discussion included the need for: patience, as it was too early for an impact evaluation; donors to provide predictable aid; capacity-building of partners to remain a key focus area for the United Nations; and an increased leadership role of the Resident Coordinators while maintaining neutrality and an inclusive system-wide focus.

101. Some delegations inquired about the "one fund" and expressed concern that core funds might be co-mingled. Panellists clarified that the "coherence funds" in the pilots did not contain core funds, only co-financing resources. It was noted that Governments retained the ability to fund agency-specific activities. Nevertheless, such activities should fall under the joint planning of the full United Nations Country Team. The importance of focusing on substance and results, and not just process, was emphasized.

Part two

102. The President of the UNDP/UNFPA Executive Board invited the Administrator, UNDP, to open part two of the discussion on the 'delivering as one' pilots on behalf of the four organizations. The Administrator spoke of the overarching parameters of flexibility and national ownership, noting that each pilot was tailored to the specific country context following the guidance of the triennial comprehensive policy review. The Administrator highlighted that the pilots were demonstrating how the United Nations system as a whole can be more effectively aligned with national priorities, and that joint programming is an essential component, centered on the UNDAF.

103. The following persons then offered their experience with the pilots: the Resident Coordinator in Albania; the UNICEF Representative in Rwanda; the Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme (WFP); and the Assistant Director-General of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

104. Representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Environment Programme recognized the pilots as an important platform for improving coherence and effectiveness, and the nationally owned, demand-driven nature of the pilots. They noted that the new UNDAF guidelines are more inclusive and responsive to 'delivering as one', while urging care in combining the meticulously constructed existing agreements into a single plan. They underscored the value of partnerships within the United Nations system, recognizing a need to strengthen the resident coordinator system with the highest quality of leadership and managerial talent and with clearer lines of accountability.

105. Delegations acknowledged the positive experiences of the pilots in creating greater alignment with national priorities and greater coherence within the United Nations system, noting that all United Nations country team members have a part to play in optimizing the resident coordinator system. They emphasized the importance of a flexible, national and context-specific approach in scaling up efforts to achieve the internationally agreed development goals. Delegations also expressed the need to reinvest savings into programmes and to reduce reporting and administrative burdens. Many recognized the stocktaking process as a precursor to a formal evaluation process, while some requested that this be based on criteria established together by all Member States and include issues such as the costs involved in coherence.

106. Many delegations cautioned against too rapid an adoption of any particular model for 'delivering as one', reiterating that coherence was a means to effectiveness rather than an end in itself, and that alternatives were still being assessed in other international forums. They stressed that coherence must be nationally led, and asserted that resources should not be reallocated based on the early experiences of the pilots, but should continue to be distributed based on multilaterally agreed formulas and principles. Some pointed out security and logistical considerations inherent in the 'one office' model. Many called on senior management at headquarters to support the pilots with clear communication; to harmonize business practices; and to facilitate and accelerate decision-making at country level. Several called on donors to provide adequate, predictable and timely funding.

C. Disaster risk reduction strategies

107. The President of the Executive Board of the WFP introduced the item, providing the audience with the main themes of the session. Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) was an ideal topic for the joint meeting of the Executive Boards because it extended across development and emergencies. The joint meeting provided an opportunity to become familiarized with the concept and vocabulary of DRR and why it should be integrated into the policies and programmes of the United Nations funds and programmes.

108. The Deputy Executive Director of WFP spoke on the topic on behalf of the four organizations. In her remarks, she emphasized adaptation and the need to mitigate the risks of natural disasters and build resilience among those most likely to be hardest hit. Thus, there was an urgent need to engage fully in DRR. United Nations organizations could do more to mitigate risks and build resilience by working together under the Hyogo Framework for Action. A stronger link between humanitarian and development efforts was needed to reduce the impact of disasters on vulnerable communities.

109. The Director of Civil Protection of the Government of Haiti presented a country-level perspective on DRR strategies. She described Haiti's vulnerability to natural hazards and the social and economic situation of the country; she then presented the national DRR strategy and the framework of collaboration with donors and the United Nations system for implementing the strategy.

110. The Deputy Director of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) described the ISDR coordination mechanism to support the Hyogo Framework for Action. She recommended building on existing structures such as the Hyogo Framework and ISDR to address DRR and making links with development and climate change. She also presented the Joint Work Programme with United Nations organizations and the existing funding mechanisms.

111. The delegations expressed their appreciation of the background paper and renewed their support to the four organizations for mainstreaming DRR into their policies and programmes. The delegations insisted on the need to link DRR with adaptation to climate change; some emphasized that DRR could reduce the cost of recovery efforts.

112. The delegations commended the four organizations for their important contributions to a more coherent United Nations at country level, noting that development and emergency response could not be seen as separate issues and stressing that ISDR was the main mechanism for implementing the Hyogo Framework for Action. They also mentioned the need for the United Nations Development Group to systematically increase its support to Member States for DRR.

113. The delegations urged the four organizations to focus on their mandates and work together with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and ISDR to determine individual roles. Coherent, linked action was needed, in accordance with individual institutional mandates. The question was raised of how to better link emergency and development activities, given the leading role of UNDP on early recovery. The importance of sharing information was also stressed. A delegation asked about funding mechanisms for adaptation to climate change.

114. In its response to questions and comments, the panel noted that the background paper was a general document intended to help the four organizations commence joint work on DRR and was not meant to imply that any of them should go beyond their individual mandates. The panel members acknowledged the threefold challenge of making a connection between relief and development, working in partnership and being guided by country strategies that prioritized DRR.

Part two
2008 annual session

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 3 to 5 June 2008

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

115. The President welcomed two new Vice-Presidents of the Bureau of the Executive Board: H.E. Mr. Gert Rosenthal of Guatemala and H.E. Mr. Simona Miculescu of Romania, who replaced H.E. Mr. Jorge Skinner-Klée of Guatemala, and H.E. Mr. Mihnea Ioan Motoc of Romania. Expressing sympathy and concern for the victims of the recent cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in the Sichuan Province of China, the President emphasized the key role of UNICEF in relief efforts and the importance of securing children's rights to protection in disasters. He also emphasized the crucial role of UNICEF in addressing the global food crisis and undernutrition.

116. Turning to the agenda item on the annual report of the Executive Director, he said the report cited many achievements of UNICEF and its partners, including the fact that the number of annual deaths of children under five fell below 10 million, to 9.7 million, for the first time. Challenges persisted, however, including in providing antiretroviral treatment for women and children with HIV, and in assisting children orphaned through HIV/AIDS. Emphasizing the importance of gender as a cross-cutting strategy of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan, he looked forward to discussing the involvement of the Executive Board in the follow-up process of the Evaluation of Gender Policy Implementation in UNICEF. He noted the important agenda items on the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative and the planned global strategy on collaborative relationships and partnerships and emphasized that working in partnerships was increasingly important to fulfilling the commitments of the Millennium Declaration and Millennium Development Goals. In this regard, he praised the ongoing contributions made by the National Committees for UNICEF.

117. The Executive Director, in her opening remarks, briefly summarized the assistance provided by UNICEF to the victims of the cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in China. These crises underscored the fact that special attention needs to be paid to natural disasters and the capacity of national governments to respond. She also described promising areas of UNICEF work in the post-conflict countries of Liberia and Sierra Leone, including in accelerated education and nutrition for children. Nutrition was also an important topic at the high-level Tokyo International Conference on African Development, where the Executive Director had launched on behalf of UNICEF the first-ever *State of Africa's Children* report, focused on child survival. Among other key issues for UNICEF addressed at the conference were overcoming challenges to achieving the Millennium Development Goals; engaging and enabling local communities; the need for integrated community-based health systems; education as key to poverty alleviation; the importance of credible data, evaluation and monitoring; and the need to focus on youth and the role of women.

118. Children, especially those under two, are among the most vulnerable to rising food and energy prices, issues that were given special attention at the Tokyo conference. UNICEF, a member of the United Nations Secretary-General's High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, addressing the impact of rising food prices, was working with partners to respond to the crisis, including through the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative.

B. Adoption of the agenda

119. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2008/9/Rev.1) of the session. One delegation requested that UNICEF provide an update during the session on the organization's response to the cyclone in Myanmar and the earthquake in China.

120. In accordance with rule 50.2 of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 38 observer delegations.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. Annual report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan

121. The report (E/ICEF/2008/10) was introduced by the Executive Director, who described key achievements in 2007 in each of the five focus areas of the MTSP. She also drew attention to the data companion to the annual report, which provided the latest available information and year-to-year trends for a wide range of targets and key indicators of UNICEF performance.

122. Delegations congratulated UNICEF for the notable progress made in the five focus areas of the MTSP, including in humanitarian situations. The continued interrelation of efforts to achieve the targets of the MTSP and the Millennium Development Goals made the MTSP a stronger instrument for advancing children's rights. One delegation mentioned the need to implement the "internationally agreed" Millennium Development Goals.

123. Many delegations welcomed progress in child survival, noting particularly the significant reduction of measles-related deaths and the milestone decline in the global annual number of young child deaths to below 10 million. However, they recognized the continued need to accelerate improvements in child, maternal and neonatal health, the provision of water and sanitation, polio eradication and the incidence of malaria.

124. UNICEF was praised for progress made in several areas: (a) work with communities and subnational authorities for the provision of basic services; (b) basic education, especially in the establishment of child-friendly schools and the adoption of quality standards for education; (c) the establishment of more extensive partnerships to improve sanitation worldwide; (d) successful work in building national systems for child protection; and (e) scaling up improved family and community care practices.

125. The global food crisis was widely cited as a threat to the continuing progress in child survival and development. Delegations welcomed the active participation of UNICEF in the work of the Secretary-General's High Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis to ensure that children's needs were met in both the short and the long term.

126. Some delegations called for research on the effects of migration on children and for more reporting on the work of UNICEF in a number of areas: providing quality learning to out-of-school children; the challenges faced in the eradication of polio; strengthening juvenile justice; how lessons learned are analysed and fed back into the programming process; strengthening the capacity of national partners; and determining whether the Accelerated Child Survival and Development initiative will be expanded beyond Africa. Some delegations requested that the results matrices of the MTSP report on all indicators.

127. Regarding HIV/AIDS, several successes were acknowledged, including the integration of HIV/AIDS education in school curricula. Concern was expressed about the apparent understatement of the share of programme funds spent on combating HIV and AIDS, and a recommendation was made for system improvements that would better capture expenditures on HIV and AIDS.

128. Delegations also acknowledged the strengthening of the capacity of the organization to respond to humanitarian crises and the leadership role of UNICEF in humanitarian clusters at the global and country levels. However, several delegations expressed concern about the challenge of meeting the MTSP target on staff recruitment for emergencies.

129. Speakers expressed satisfaction with the importance UNICEF attached to human rights-based approaches to programming and with the strengthening of the focus of cooperation on the most vulnerable children and their families.

130. Several delegations asked that UNICEF continue to strengthen its role in middle-income countries, particularly in supporting these countries to address widening disparities. It was recommended that UNICEF forge stronger alliances with the private sector in these countries, encouraging a deeper sense of corporate social responsibility.

131. UNICEF was requested to intensify its strategic partnerships generally in order to deliver widespread and sustainable results for children around the world. It was noted that without strategic partnerships, the goals of *A World Fit for Children* and the Millennium Development Goals could not be achieved.

132. Many delegations recognized the need to integrate gender into all aspects of the organization's work, recommending that policies and programmes be aligned with the recommendations of the evaluation report on the implementation of the gender policy in UNICEF.

133. Many speakers thanked UNICEF for the consultation process taking place around the midterm review of the MTSP, to be discussed at the 2008 second regular session. Two delegations voiced support for the extension of the MTSP to 2011, in order to align planning cycles with those of UNDP and UNFPA and with the lead-up to the 2015 deadline of the Millennium Development Goals. It was noted that the midterm review would provide an opportunity to assess what actions needed to be accelerated for the achievement of the Goals and to consider how UNICEF will address emerging issues, such as climate change, urbanization and migration.

134. A number of delegations praised the efforts of UNICEF to strengthen accountability and efficiency. Several speakers commended the Executive Director for the organizational review and said they looked forward to discussing the progress of the 10 key improvement initiatives that had been launched. UNICEF was requested to further strengthen results-based management approaches in its work and to address the underlying issues on recruitment identified in the annual report.

135. While noting progress made in ensuring a results focus in the annual report, some delegations asked UNICEF to further streamline the report, paying more attention to outcomes, impact and the use of resources. Noting that the data companion provided much of the required information on results, delegations asked for its integration into the annual report, possibly as an annex.

136. The continued shift of UNICEF to support upstream policy work was acknowledged, as was the organization's increased engagement in sector-wide approaches, the promotion of child-friendly poverty-reduction strategies and budgets, and joint work with other United Nations agencies at the country level.

137. Appreciation was expressed for the commitment of UNICEF to implementing the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of the United Nations System. Several delegations pointed out the challenges associated with Delivering as One, including in harmonizing the differences between agencies in their rules, planning cycles, reporting requirements, procurement systems and other business practices. Savings from coherence efforts should be transferred to spending on programmes. Speakers called for a strengthened role of the Resident Coordinator, and emphasized that elements of the reform package implemented in a particular country should depend on local requirements. At the global level as well, it was recommended that UNICEF further harmonize its systems with those of other agencies.

138. Many delegations expressed concern about the decreasing proportion of regular resources to the total, noting that the dominance of other resources could lead to fragmentation of programming.

139. Thanking Executive Board members for their comments and questions, the Executive Director expressed her appreciation to countries for advancing the rights of children. She emphasized the commitment of UNICEF to results-based management, with results achieved evident in the data companion. She said that attributing results to individual agencies was difficult in the context of wider partnership for achieving results; UNICEF used the Millennium Development Goals and the MTSP targets as its benchmarks. Noting that evaluations were useful in determining what worked and what did not, she stated that UNICEF had been working on establishing a stronger research base, including through the Innocenti Research Centre. Partner surveys had been piloted in the past year and would be continued.

140. The Executive Director further emphasized that UNICEF would continue to have a strong development and humanitarian focus. She underlined the fact that though UNICEF did not achieve the MTSP target on recruitment for emergencies, the numbers did not reflect the real progress UNICEF had made in staff deployment to countries and regions affected by disasters through the use of its surge capacity and other arrangements. Regarding recruitment in general, she said that the annual

report explained that some posts were put on hold because of anticipated changes in the support budget.

141. Stating that gender issues were central to development, the Executive Director cited examples of the promising work of UNICEF in the field to address sexual violence and other gender issues. At headquarters, she said, a senior staff member would be designated to follow up on recommendations of the evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF.

142. She said that UNICEF would also continue to maximize strategic partnerships and collaborative opportunities to benefit children.

143. In response to comments about the global food crisis, the Executive Director explained that addressing the crisis and its impact on child nutrition was a high priority for UNICEF. The organization actively participated in United Nations system-wide efforts of the Secretary-General and would continue to work with countries on ongoing initiatives, including food fortification, provision of therapeutic feeding for the severely malnourished, supplementation with micronutrients, and promotion of exclusive breastfeeding.

144. UNICEF was continuing support for polio eradication, discussing efforts with senior officials of affected countries.

145. UNICEF continued to be committed to United Nations coherence, reflecting the priorities of host Governments, and was working as part of the High Level Committee on Management of the Chief Executives Board for Coordination of the United Nations System on harmonizing different rules and regulations on a system-wide basis. She noted that there was a need for more active participation in the successful sector-wide approaches.

146. The Executive Director explained how expenditure on HIV and AIDS had been reported, adding that UNICEF would continue to monitor closely such expenditure in the future.

147. Referring to the suggestion to include the data companion in the annual report, the Executive Director reminded delegations of the strict word limit for official United Nations documents and said that the data companion would continue to be presented as a complementary report.

148. In conclusion, the Executive Director confirmed that UNICEF would continue to work to ensure that the decline in childhood mortality continued, in part thanks to the use of accelerated child survival approaches in and beyond Africa. She said UNICEF was thankful for the collaboration with countries and partners and would continue to work towards the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

149. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/11 (see annex).

B. UNICEF global strategy for collaborative relationships and partnerships: a preliminary concept note

150. The Director of Private Fundraising and Partnerships introduced the preliminary concept note on the UNICEF global strategy for collaborative relationships and partnerships (E/ICEF/2008/12). The strategy, he said, had been driven by the need for organization-wide clarity on collaborative relationships and partnerships and by the new imperatives of the fast-changing development landscape. The Director emphasized the need for new and effective systems to guide the organization's strategic engagement with Governments, the private sector and civil society, as well as with partners in the United Nations system and international financial institutions. He stressed the importance of mobilizing all stakeholders to deliver better results for children and for achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He assured the Executive Board that the process of developing the strategy, to be finalized for discussion at the annual session of 2009, would include regular consultations with internal and external stakeholders, including multilateral partners, civil society organizations, private sector partners and members of the Executive Board.

151. Delegations thanked UNICEF for the preliminary concept note, which was generally considered to be concise and informative, and pledged their continued support to the work of UNICEF with partners. Several delegations recommended that the strategy contribute to UNICEF core functions; improve programme implementation; and provide effective influence on existing mechanisms and partnerships. Some delegations also requested that further linkages be made with other strategies, including Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS, and with the MTSP and its midterm review.

152. While some delegations said that the preliminary concept note provided a solid foundation, others requested that it be more specific and provide detailed information on existing partnerships, as the Executive Board had requested.

153. The representative of the Standing Group of National Committees for UNICEF took the floor to highlight the contribution made by National Committees to the resources of UNICEF, which represent about a third of the total income; to the promotion of UNICEF work around the world; and to the building of good relationships with Governments, NGOs and other partners. The representative said that the Group looked forward to participating further in the development of the strategy for partnerships.

154. Several delegations remarked that the concept note emphasized the importance of partnerships but did not outline how existing partnerships were functioning, why some functioned better than others, what lessons had been learned from them, and how this information would be utilized in developing the new strategy. The secretariat responded that a number of partnership reviews were still under way. These included the evaluation of global programme partnerships and the review of private sector partnerships. Key findings of these reviews would inform the global strategy.

155. It was also noted that the concept note did not specifically recognize relationships with National Committees for UNICEF and with Governments as 'partnerships', even though these

relationships were critical to capacity-building and to achieving timely results for children. The secretariat explained that National Committees were considered to be part of the UNICEF organization, and not external partners. If the strategy addressed direct relationships with Governments, it would encompass too large a scope and risk becoming a parallel MTSP.

156. UNICEF was requested to hold consultations with the Executive Board in autumn 2008 and spring 2009 to provide updates on progress on development of the strategy and to further consult on outstanding issues.

C. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

(a) Draft country programme documents

157. The Director, Programmes, provided an overview of the nine draft country programme documents before the Executive Board.

West and Central Africa

158. The Regional Director for West and Central Africa introduced the draft CPDs for Benin, Republic of the Congo, Niger and Nigeria (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.4 and Corr.1 through E/ICEF/2008/P/L.7 and Corr.1). The draft CPD for Niger was presented in conjunction with the report of the field visit of members of the Executive Board to Niger.

159. The representative of **Benin** thanked UNICEF for its support and requested clarification on several points in the draft CPD regarding factors that would hinder implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. These included the under-representation of children in government policies and the nature and extent of child trafficking. The representative emphasized the need for greater funding from regular resources, especially in proportion to other resources.

160. Also speaking on the draft CPD for Benin, one delegation suggested that the objectives were too ambitious for a four-year period and requested information on strategies to be used by UNICEF to reach those objectives and programme coverage. Additional clarification was requested as well on partnerships, especially with the private sector. With regard to child trafficking, UNICEF should concentrate its efforts in the parts of the country where the problem is most acute. In education, efforts should extend beyond the formal system to reach children out of school.

161. The representative of **Niger** highlighted his Government's commitment to the well-being of children and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. He noted that the Executive Board had visited Niger during the year and was able to obtain a sense of the huge challenges children still face in his country, especially in the areas of child survival, access to basic services and maternal mortality. Despite the country's several notable successes in areas such as reducing child mortality, decreasing HIV/AIDS prevalence and combating malaria, Niger required massive support from its partners. He welcomed the efforts of UNICEF and all bilateral and multilateral partners.

162. One speaker, commenting on the Niger programme, praised the actions of UNICEF, in particular in reducing malnutrition, and in women's education, but emphasized that the programme could be more ambitious in its aim to reduce acute malnutrition. He also encouraged UNICEF to ensure greater coordination with partners.

163. The Minister of Women's Affairs and Social Development of **Nigeria** conveyed her Government's appreciation of the cooperation with UNICEF and highlighted several of her Government's recent achievements, accomplished with the support of UNICEF, in areas of policy development (e.g., the passage of the Child Rights Act, National Child Policy, national guidelines on the establishment and management of orphanages), capacity-building of national institutions responsible for child protection, birth registration, and HIV/AIDS. She emphasized the Government's priorities in the areas of child survival, education and poverty reduction.

164. Two delegations, commenting on the draft CPD for Nigeria, emphasized the importance of polio eradication and the commitment of their countries to supporting eradication efforts in endemic countries. One delegation highlighted the threat posed to neighbouring countries by the increasing number of polio cases in Nigeria.

165. The Regional Director responded to comments on the various draft CPDs. In Benin, the education programme covered out-of-school children in special education programmes, and regular resources were allocated based on the formula approved by the Executive Board. In Niger, there was a need to further reduce the high malnutrition rates. In Nigeria and other countries, UNICEF was committed to polio eradication.

Middle East and North Africa

166. The Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa introduced the draft CPD for Sudan (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.12 and Corr.1) for 2009-2012, which was designed to contribute to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, the Five Year Strategic Plan of the Government of National Unity, and the three-year Budget Plan of the Government of Southern Sudan.

167. The representative of the Republic of the Sudan expressed gratitude for the cooperation between the Government and UNICEF, saying that the programme reinforced the efforts Sudan made to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. The representative acknowledged the donor countries for their support to the programme; only with this support could rehabilitation and reconstruction plans be achieved. Appreciation was expressed for the fact that the CPD was prepared in close collaboration with UNICEF, the Ministry of International Cooperation, and partners in the South. Responding to comments made during discussion of the CPD, the representative said that any interventions or attempts to politicize the programme were unacceptable.

168. A number of delegations commended the work of UNICEF in Sudan, particularly in advancing the situation of children in the areas of health, education and protection, and expressed appreciation of the effort to harmonize the programme cycle with national plans. The country programme was coherent and the goals achievable.

169. One delegation said that such a large programme demanded internal capacity and a focus on peace-building, climate change, gender equality and access to water and food. An integrated approach on the part of the United Nations was important, especially in relation to child protection.

170. Another delegation alerted UNICEF to discrepancies in statistical data on the indicators for under-five mortality. The delegation requested more clarity on the issue of financing social transfers and offered assistance in this regard. Important progress had been made in education; however, it was important to stress access, quality education, increased retention, reduced dropout rates and education for girls. UNICEF was encouraged to report on key progress indicators of quality rather than quantity in the results matrix.

171. A delegation requested more in-depth analysis of the prevailing situation in Sudan, especially regarding alternative water sources. Specific challenges of different regions should be taken into account to implement the programme. Also highlighted as important were capacity development, the strengthening of monitoring and evaluation capacity, quality indicators and outcomes, and improved analytical work in the areas of child poverty and rights. There was a need for an improved database system related to the development goals. Child protection strategies were an integral part of UNICEF work in Sudan.

172. In response, the Regional Director underlined the importance of capacity-building as an organizational priority and of girls' education and retention in school. Regarding supporting systems, UNICEF was working towards a systems approach rather than social transfers. As for statistical data, she would check with the country office and respond to the delegations bilaterally. She underlined that UNICEF was strategically positioned to deliver on the ground in coordination with partners and that the role of UNICEF in furthering peace dividends was reflected throughout all sectors, including health, education and protection.

Americas and the Caribbean

173. The Regional Director for the Americas and the Caribbean introduced the draft short-duration CPDs for Ecuador (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.8) and Guatemala (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.9 and Corr.1). Both extensions were requested in order to allow more time for the new Governments in these countries and the respective United Nations country teams to discuss priorities and strategies.

174. The representative of **Guatemala** expressed gratitude for UNICEF cooperation, which had contributed to various advancements for children, including the establishment of legal and decentralized institutional frameworks for child protection systems, and support of intercultural bilingual education. He emphasized his Government's commitment to jointly addressing the existing development challenges, especially chronic malnutrition and challenges faced by the large indigenous population, and to implementing the recently adopted Law on Adoptions. Last, he raised a concern about the reduction in regular resources in the draft CPD for Guatemala and inquired about the reason for the decrease.

175. The need to focus on indigenous populations was strongly echoed by both the Regional Director and other delegations, who encouraged UNICEF to further prioritize excluded indigenous populations in the next CPD for the full programme cycle, including by supporting bilingual education in Maya and Spanish. Several delegations also stressed the importance of the timely support of UNICEF to implementing the country's new law on adoptions.

176. The Regional Director also highlighted the challenge of chronic malnutrition in the region, a key indicator of hunger, as demonstrated by a recent joint report launched by United Nations agencies on health-related Millennium Development Goals in Latin America and the Caribbean. One speaker stressed the importance of the role of UNICEF in implementing national emergency measures to combat malnutrition. Another speaker encouraged UNICEF to increase its actions to address violence against children.

177. The representative of **Ecuador** praised UNICEF for its support and cooperation in Ecuador. She highlighted her Government's commitment to increasing social investment; to funding the country's newly adopted development plan through resources derived from the oil industry; to continuing its subsidy programme for vulnerable children and women; and to supporting UNICEF in its work with the National Council for Children. She questioned the reason for the reduction of 10 per cent in regular resources funding in the draft CPD for Ecuador.

178. In response, the Regional Director noted that regular resources funding was an issue of global scope and suggested that it be addressed at that level.

South Asia

179. The Regional Director for South Asia introduced the draft country programme documents for Afghanistan (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.10 and Corr.1) and Pakistan (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.11).

180. The representative of **Afghanistan** welcomed the proposed one-year extension of the country programme document aimed to align programme cycles supported by the United Nations with the Afghanistan National Development Strategy Framework. Thanking UNICEF for its continuous support, he highlighted the need to increase the budget allocation for child protection, as the protection of children against violence, exploitation and abuse was a high priority. Another high priority was the food crisis, which required assistance from UNICEF through the strengthening of emergency preparedness and school feeding. He pointed out that insecurity caused by the resurgence of terrorist activities, especially in the southern and eastern parts of the country, remained the major obstacle in improving the lives of Afghan children and women. Synergy and consolidation of activities of the United Nations system were essential to improve the impact of aid.

181. A number of delegations emphasized that the extensive budget and the variety of components of the country programme covering most parts of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy Framework showed that UNICEF was a central development partner in Afghanistan. Information was requested on UNICEF support to facilitating Afghanistan's reporting on child rights. While underlining the need for UNICEF to work closely with the United Nations Assistance Mission in

Afghanistan (UNAMA) in protecting children affected by conflict, delegations recommended that UNICEF increase the budget allocation to child protection; focus on hard-to-reach provinces for education; and continue to provide assistance to a wide number of programmes in the country, including in the less stable provinces. UNICEF, in preparing for the next phase of the programme, should continue to mainstream gender in all focus areas, including through the disaggregation of data.

182. Another delegation emphasized the importance of emergency response and humanitarian support, especially attention paid to the needs of children and women affected by violence and to gender-based violence. Information was requested on how the country programme response to the 2007 Humanitarian Action Report linked with and supported efforts of the ongoing development of the Common Humanitarian Action Plan.

183. The representative of **Pakistan** confirmed that the draft country programme document had been developed in close collaboration with United Nations agencies and development partners. The Government of Pakistan had volunteered to be one of the eight pilot countries to implement the recommendations of the High-level Panel on United Nations System-wide Coherence. The extension of the 2004-2008 UNDAF to 2010, aligning the Framework with national planning cycles, necessitated this short-duration country programme for 2009. He said that programme strategies had linked education and health components with child protection and social protection measures and the strengthening of policy dialogue and advocacy. This was in keeping with Pakistan's change in focus from service delivery to greater engagement in policy dialogue and advocacy with key stakeholders to achieve better results.

184. One delegation, speaking on the draft CPD for Pakistan, said that UNICEF was playing an important role in the implementation of the One UN pilot and called upon UNICEF headquarters to provide the necessary flexibility and support for this process.

185. In response, the Regional Director noted that the Humanitarian Action Report and the requirements of the UNICEF emergency appeal for Afghanistan were fed into to the Common Humanitarian Action Plan. He expressed support for recommendations made to strengthen national capacity and emergency preparedness in that country and for increased consolidation of efforts of partners. UNICEF worked closely with Ministries and other partners to facilitate reporting to the Committee on the Rights of the Child. UNICEF was experimenting with a number of strategies for outreach to vulnerable populations and worked closely with UNAMA, particularly in child protection. Gender issues were being addressed in a wider range of programmes.

186. The Regional Director highlighted the important role played by the Government of Pakistan in emergency efforts in that country and elsewhere, with technical support provided by UNICEF. UNICEF had been a strong supporter of the very important One UN pilot programme in Pakistan, helping to move the process forward. He welcomed the delegation's recommendation for ensuring UNICEF headquarters' flexibility and support for these efforts in Pakistan.

Approval of draft country programme documents

187. In decision 2008/8, the Executive Board approved the aggregate indicative budgets of the country programme documents for full programme cycles, and approved, in their entirety, the country programme documents for short-duration programme cycles. (See decision 2008/8 in the annex.)

188. The President informed the Executive Board that the draft country programme documents for full programme cycles would be revised, taking into consideration comments made during the discussion, and posted on the UNICEF website within six weeks of the session. The revised country programme documents will be approved by the Executive Board on a no-objection basis at the second regular session of 2008, unless at least five members inform the secretariat in writing of their wish to bring a particular country programme before the Executive Board.

189. In a statement made under "Other matters", several delegations referred to Executive Board decision 2006/19 and said that it was their understanding that UNICEF was to present a list of draft country programme documents for which discussion was to be deferred to the second regular session of the Executive Board, along with the reasons for the deferral. The delegations requested that, in the future, UNICEF provide the Executive Board with such a list ahead of the annual session.

D. Evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF: planned follow-up action

190. The Associate Director for Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement (Policy and Practice) presented a summary of the key findings and recommendations of the recent evaluation of the gender policy implementation in UNICEF, together with the organization's follow-up plan, as set out in Executive Board document E/ICEF/2008/CRP.12.

191. She noted that the evaluation highlighted some of the key strengths of UNICEF in promoting gender equality, including many good practices, which were supported by the commitment of managers and UNICEF staff members in general to human rights and social justice. UNICEF demonstrated several weaknesses and shortfalls in its implementation of gender equality: limited staff capacity; weak accountability; ad hoc application of the gender equality policy; inadequate senior-level commitment; and confusion on the part of staff between the policy on gender equality and gender parity in the workplace on the one hand and the pursuit of gender equality results in programmes on the other. Similar weaknesses were experienced by other United Nations agencies and partners as well. UNICEF nevertheless had strong potential to be a leader in gender equality. The organization was undertaking a three-phase response over the short and long term, and development of a gender action plan.

192. Delegations welcomed the evaluation and its key recommendations and findings as well as the openness and transparency of UNICEF in sharing the results. There was general agreement that gender equality was crucial to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It was emphasized that the empowerment of women had a strong impact on children's health and well-being.

193. The positive results and good practices already achieved by UNICEF were praised by delegations, who made several suggestions for the follow-up response to the evaluation's findings and recommendations: integrate a gender perspective into every aspect of the work of UNICEF; revise the 1994 gender policy and consult with Executive Board members in the process; revise gender policies frequently, perhaps every 5 to 10 years; develop conceptual tools and standards; formulate clear objectives, concrete and time-bound actions and a strong system of accountability; track and monitor allocations and expenditures for gender equality results as part of the results-based management approach; monitor and evaluate progress; report annually in the Executive Director's annual report on progress in achieving gender equality results; develop staff capacity in the promotion of gender equality and parity, recognizing it as a key competency, and hire new experts at the global, regional and country levels; encourage stronger commitment on the part of senior management; and strengthen partnerships at all levels, within the United Nations system and beyond.

194. Delegations also stressed the need to pay particular attention to country-specific and cultural contexts in gender analysis, in the drafting of a gender action plan and in the revision of the gender policy.

195. It was generally recognized that UNICEF could become a leader in gender equality, given the organization's strong field presence, rights-based approach, and partnerships. In this regard, the efforts of UNICEF to foster a common approach on gender within the United Nations country team were welcomed. The midpoint of the 2006-2009 MTSP presented a good window of opportunity for action.

196. In response, the Executive Director reiterated her strong personal commitment to gender equality. She underlined the importance of gender equality in achieving sustainable development and the inextricable link between the empowerment of women and the well-being of children. Citing examples of ongoing work in gender equality, specifically in the fields of education and sexual and gender-based violence, she stressed the need to reinforce such actions.

197. The Associate Director for Gender, Rights and Civic Engagement explained that the process of consultations with delegations and partners was laid out in phase II of the response. She also stressed the importance of partnerships and need for UNICEF to learn from the good practices of its partners, pointing out that UNICEF was already working with other agencies to share experiences in advancing gender equality.

198. She agreed with the suggestion that further efforts were needed to adapt gender equality programming to country-level and culture-specific contexts, and referred to existing guidelines for Situation Analysis reports on identifying gender disparities and their causes. She also agreed that midpoint of the MTSP presented a crucial and unique opportunity for UNICEF to act. Noting that it was not entirely feasible at this point to reconfigure UNICEF financial systems to track expenditures for gender equality, she said that it would be more productive to concentrate efforts on tracking results and emphasized that the suggestion to develop conceptual tools and standards would be taken seriously.

199. In decision 2008/10, the Executive Board requested UNICEF to present at its first regular session of 2009 a management response to all recommendations of the evaluation, including actions and timeframes for completion.

200. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/10 (see annex).

E. Report on implementation of the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative

201. The Executive Board had before it the report (E/ICEF/2008/11), which was introduced by the Director, Programmes. He summarized recent developments in implementing the Initiative, including the formation of a joint secretariat in early 2008 at WFP in Rome, with one senior staff member each from WFP, WHO and UNICEF. UNICEF had allocated $300,000 from regular resources to support this effort.

202. The ECHUI secretariat has developed a framework for the coordination of strategy and programme development, as well as communication materials, and had launched coordination of inter-agency interventions at country level. An analysis of the effectiveness of existing national programmes had started in a number of countries.

203. Four key actions had been identified for promotion and scale-up as part of the support to national programmes. In response to the rising food prices, the initiative will aim to provide leadership in ensuring that priority is given to the most vulnerable children and women. In addition to coordinated support for country programmes, the initiative will continue to build national capacity to detect and strengthen systems for managing malnutrition from 0-5 years of age, and expand the use of Ready-to-use Therapeutic Foods (RUTFs). UNICEF had recently released technical guidelines for country office use of RUTFs, such as Plumpy'nut®.

204. Several delegations expressed their support for UNICEF involvement in this initiative, emphasizing the importance of addressing child undernutrition and hunger in achieving the Millennium Development Goals. ECHUI was also viewed as an important area of cooperation among various United Nations agencies. Several factors undermined initiatives to alleviate hunger and under nutrition, including unequal distribution of income, the negative impact of the production of bio-fuels on food stuffs, and environmental degradation.

205. In addition to country delegations, the representative of Rotary International indicated his organization's support for the initiative. Both of the two worldwide resource groups of Rotary, one dealing with water and sanitation and the other with health concerns, will be working on the initiative.

206. There was a widespread recognition by many delegations of the importance of addressing the rising food prices and the food security crisis. Requests were made for more information on the plans of UNICEF to address the food crisis, including details on how complementarities with existing initiatives and activities would be assured; how interventions would be targeted and prioritized; and how the national situations would be monitored. It was important to emphasize gender issues and the vulnerability of women as well strengthening capacity in developing countries both through North-

South and South-South cooperation. In Latin America, increases in food prices were likely to pull many people into poverty.

207. It was emphasized that States need to invest in rural and agricultural activities; to promote local foods and local solutions; and to evaluate the impact of international trade standards, agreements and subsidies on the food crisis. Several delegations asked for information on the collaboration between UNICEF and other international agencies regarding food fortification to address anaemia and other micronutrient deficiencies.

208. Some delegations expressed concern that the ECHUI could become a centrally led initiative that could undermine the response at country level. To counter this possibility, it was important to consult national Governments on priority areas and utilize country analyses and studies on the effectiveness of existing country programmes. ECHUI should support country-led integrated approaches to improving the nutritional status of children.

209. It was recognized by several delegations that women and children were at the highest risk of experiencing undernutrition and that it was crucial to reach children under two, as 0-2 years represented a critical age when nutrition was most needed. Programmes should prioritize these groups, focusing more on women, not only to improve outcomes for children but also to support gender equality, a key organizational mandate of UNICEF.

210. One delegation suggested scale-up of school feeding programmes in response to the food crisis; these would have the added benefit of increasing enrolment and attendance rates.

211. The secretariat took note of the comments and responded to delegations' questions. Several recommendations were noted in particular: the need to improve nutrition in a child's early years; the usefulness of school feeding programmes, which also buttress household income and food availability; the importance of country-level analysis and assessments in order to determine the best interventions to be supported as part of the young child survival, growth, and development strategies; and the need for a nationally led international response. It was noted that UNICEF, as a member of the Secretary-General's task force on the food crisis, will continue to monitor and respond to the situation. It was further noted that responses would also be strengthened at the country level: all UNICEF country offices have been analysing the situation and have started to strengthen their programmatic and policy level work to support national programmes and efforts.

F. Reports of the field visits of the Executive Board

(a) Report of the field visit to the Lao People's Democratic Republic by members of the Bureau of the Executive Board, 9 to 16 February 2008

212. The Executive Board had before it the report of the field visit (E/ICEF/2008/13), which was introduced by the President of the Bureau and Executive Board, following a short film on the visit. Praising the "excellent" programme in the country, he applauded the priority attention being given to children by the Government. He said this support was critical in a country where nearly a quarter of

the population lives on less than $1 a day. He highlighted the efforts of UNICEF and its partners in education, especially for girls and for children in hard-to-reach communities, describing successful work in the promotion of child-friendly schools and school feeding programmes that benefited children and their families.

213. The representative of the Lao People's Democratic Republic to the United Nations expressed his appreciation for the visit. He praised the successful 2007-2011 programme of cooperation of his country with UNICEF, adding that partnerships were crucial to ensuring its success.

(b) Report of the joint field visit to Haiti of the Executive Boards of the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Children's Fund and the World Food Programme, 1 to 9 March 2008

214. The report (E/ICEF/2008/CRP.11 and DP-FPA/2008/CRP.1) was introduced by H.E. Mr. Pavle Jevremović, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Serbia to the United Nations, and member of the UNICEF Executive Board.

215. Ambassador Jevremović cited the many challenges faced by Haiti, a fragile State with weak institutions, and highlighted the "impressive" contribution of UNICEF to the complex integrated United Nations mission in Haiti.

216. Ms. Anna Ovcharenko, delegation of the Russian Federation and Rapporteur for the 20-member field visit, then presented the report, which focused on United Nations system-wide issues.

217. The representative of Haiti expressed appreciation for the support of UNICEF in the areas of child protection, potable water for schools, gender equality and education, especially education for children with disabilities.

(c) Report of the field visit to Niger by members of the Executive Board, 29 March to 4 April 2008

218. Following a short film on the field visit to Niger by members of the Executive Board, H.E. Mr. Robert Hill, Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations, introduced the report (E/ICEF/2008/15) as head of the delegation. The report was presented in conjunction with the discussion of the draft country programme document for Niger for 2009-2013. Thanking the Government of Niger for providing support and access at every level, Ambassador Hill said the country acknowledged that it was battling enormous challenges, from malnutrition to low levels of education. He said that the delegation was highly impressed with the effectiveness of the UNICEF operation, particularly the ways in which it worked with other organizations, including United Nations agencies, and with the Government of Niger. The UNICEF team, he said, demonstrated a real sense of mission and was appreciated by the Government and the broader community. Ambassador Hill emphasized the support of UNICEF and its partners for decentralization; providing quality services in health, education, water supply, nutrition and child protection; capacity-building; and addressing the

challenge of early marriage, which is linked into the broader issue of education and harmful traditional practices.

G. UNICEF Child Protection Strategy

219. The Executive Board had before it the UNICEF Child Protection Strategy (E/ICEF/2008/Rev.1) in support of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan. The Executive Board adopted the Strategy in decision 2008/12 (see annex).

220. Following the adoption of the decision on the Child Protection Strategy, one delegation made two points about the strategy: (a) paragraph 43 of the document made a clear distinction between emergencies and other types of violations of child protection principles, and therefore the list of specific categories of violations mentioned were not the same as in the emergency section; and (b) it was important to emphasize that the reference document mentioned in paragraph 60 had not yet been published. The delegation expressed interest in commenting on the document once it was published.

H. Address by the Chairperson of the Global Staff Association

221. The Chairperson of the UNICEF Global Staff Association said that staff safety and security was the top concern for UNICEF staff members around the world, especially in light of the bombing of United Nations premises in Algiers in December 2007. She noted that the Association had raised several security needs: the safety of United Nations premises; adequate protection of national staff; stress counselling for staff; extra protection for staff working in high-risk areas or politicized situations; and assurance of the safety of female staff in countries where women's rights are less respected.

222. The Chairperson also stated other concerns: the declining purchasing power of staff salaries, which required methods for re-assessment of salaries and benefits; and the need for staff development, with a focus on gender balance and national professional staff.

223. She cited the positive relationship of UNICEF management with the organization's staff associations as a United Nations best practice that should be continued.

I. Other matters

Updates on the UNICEF response to natural disasters in Myanmar and China

224. The Regional director for East Asia and the Pacific gave an update on the UNICEF response to the natural disasters in Myanmar and China in 2008, which included the following information: The cyclone in Myanmar in May 2008 had affected almost 2.5 million people, including nearly 200,000 children under five. As agreed within the United Nations system emergency response, UNICEF had assumed leadership for the coordination of humanitarian assistance in the clusters of nutrition, child protection, and water, sanitation and hygiene, and was a co-lead for education, together with Save the Children UK. UNICEF had participated in the development of the inter-agency flash appeal; the

UNICEF portion of the request for resources was $25 million. UNICEF was also participating in a needs assessment with the Government and other partners.

225. This report was followed by an update on the UNICEF response to the May 2008 earthquake in the Sichuan province of China, highlighting the following information: The human toll included an estimated 69,000 people dead, 373,000 injured and 18,000 missing. The UNICEF Representative in China also chaired the United Nations Disaster Management Team and therefore played a critical role in supporting the Resident Coordinator in leading the United Nations response as a whole. As part of its response, UNICEF had implemented ecologically adapted water distribution and village sanitation services. A major aim was to quickly shift from immediate relief to long-term recovery through the use of pre-existing programmes, including disaster preparedness planning and response.

226. The Director of Emergency Programmes further noted that from the onset of the emergency, UNICEF had been working on the ground very closely with WHO and WFP, which led the clusters in health and food, respectively.

227. The representative of Myanmar thanked UNICEF for its efforts, noting that UNICEF was among the first to assist the victims in his country. He said that the early set-up of disease surveillance mechanisms had ensured there had been no outbreak of communicable diseases. He noted that the Ministry of Education of Myanmar, which benefited from UNICEF assistance in repairing schools and providing educational materials, was able to reopen schools in the affected areas in the first week of June.

228. The representative of China thanked UNICEF for the support given to her Government in its unprecedented emergency relief operation. UNICEF had provided tents, medical supplies and water purification tablets through the Government. Although aftershocks and secondary disasters continued to threaten the devastated areas, resettlement and post-disaster reconstruction had moved to the forefront of the agenda, and the Government was assessing the extent of the damage and losses so that a rehabilitation and reconstruction plan could be drawn up within three months.

J. Closing of the session

229. In her closing statement, the Executive Director expressed her appreciation to the many delegations who had travelled from their capitals to attend the session. She also conveyed her appreciation of the Executive Board's endorsement of the Child Protection Strategy, saying that protection for children was an important part of the organization's work, covering many issues, from violence against children to child labour to child soldiers. On the matter of partnerships, she acknowledged that a considerable amount of work remained, but said she believed that it was important to recognize how better to collaborate with others to find solutions and produce sustainable results and outcomes for children.

230. The Executive Director reiterated that UNICEF was strongly committed to incorporating a gender perspective into the work of the organization. She said that addressing gender issues was critical to development, adding that much of the work of UNICEF in gender, whether girls' education,

protection of women of girls, addressing harmful practices or mothers' and children's health, was carried out together as an integrated package.

231. She said that the discussion on the Ending Child Hunger and Undernutrition Initiative revealed the importance of integrating various responses when addressing the situation caused by the rise in global food prices. She noted that it was critical to address not only the immediate needs of food aid but, more importantly, the longer-term issue of food production. UNICEF would continue to be very engaged in collaborations in the field, she said, so that children would not suffer from undernutrition, which was a contributing cause to about one third of under-five mortality.

232. Regarding the field visits of the Executive Board, the Executive Director said she was pleased to learn how much more engaged the Executive Board members were after they had been to the field, seeing first hand the work of staff, often in the most difficult circumstances. The joint field visit to Haiti further demonstrated how important it was to witness how the integrated United Nations missions were operating and how UNICEF operated in the field as part of an integrated mission in a difficult environment.

233. She emphasized that the update on the UNICEF response to the emergencies in Myanmar and China had shown how the agencies of the United Nations system had together taken on a tremendous responsibility to assist the victims.

234. Finally, the Executive Director stressed that UNICEF management took staff security very seriously and that it was working within the inter-agency process as well as with the UNICEF security staff on determining how best to mitigate the risks of staff members working under very difficult and often dangerous circumstances. She said she appreciated the working relationship management had with the staff associations in addressing this and other matters.

235. The President, in closing, thanked the Executive Board and the secretariat for their constructive cooperation, which had led to some important decisions. The agreement on the Child Protection Strategy was crucial, as protecting children was one of the core activities of UNICEF. He noted that the decision on the implementation of the UNICEF gender policy had underscored how important it was to work for the rights of women and girls in order to facilitate development. Discussions had also highlighted the global food-price crisis, indicating that this issue would become increasingly significant in the work of UNICEF. The President also noted that the update on the emergency response in Myanmar and China had demonstrated once again the importance of the work of UNICEF in disaster situations. Finally, he indicated the importance of the midterm review of the UNICEF MTSP as an agenda item for the second regular session and said that the Executive Board during that session would revisit the issue of a possible extension of the MTSP, following several informal consultations that will take place on the subject prior to the session.

Part three
Second regular session of 2008

Held at United Nations Headquarters from 15 to 18 September 2008

I. Organization of the session

A. Opening of the session

236. The President of the Executive Board opened the session by extending a welcome to H.E. Mr. Oumar Daou, Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations, who had joined the Executive Board as a Vice-President representing the African Group of States.

237. Noting that the 2008 Millennium Development Goals Report had concluded that many of the Goals would not be met, he stated that UNICEF needed more resources in order to improve the lives of children around the world. It was important to improve the balance between regular resources and other resources and to improve the predictability of funding through such means as thematic funding. He highlighted several key agenda items to be discussed, which included the midterm review of the medium-term strategic plan and a proposal for its extension through 2011. It was important to adjust the focus areas of the plan to be able to address challenges such as climate change. He concluded by praising the excellent work of the National Committees for UNICEF.

238. The UNICEF Executive Director, in her opening remarks, announced new senior appointments: Richard Morgan, Director of Policy and Practice; Afshan Khan, Director of Public Sector Alliances and Resource Mobilization; and Mary Roodkowsky, Principal Adviser, Ethics. She highlighted two other issues of central importance to UNICEF staff: the importance of staff safety and security and the results of the global staff survey 2008. The Executive Director highlighted the support provided by UNICEF and its partners in natural disasters and conflict, from flooding in Bihar to hurricanes in the Caribbean region to tension in and around Georgia, and shared observations made from her visits to Togo, Madagascar and Mozambique, including progress made in areas such as reduction of maternal and child mortality.

239. Attention was drawn to the importance of recent and upcoming conferences and events: the Seventeenth International AIDS Conference in Mexico City, which placed children on the AIDS agenda in a concrete way; the 3rd High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, in Accra, which underscored the importance of delivering on the Paris commitments; and the upcoming high-level meeting on Africa's development and the High-Level Event on the Millennium Development Goals, both of which would emphasize the need to identify gaps and strengthen collaboration in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Towards that end, she noted that a 27-per-cent reduction had been made in child mortality since 1990, but there was still a long way to go to achieve a two-thirds reduction in child mortality by 2015, especially in Africa and Asia.

B. Adoption of the agenda

240. The Executive Board adopted the agenda, timetable and organization of work (E/ICEF/2008/16 and E/ICEF/2008/16/Corr.1) for the session.

241. In accordance with rule 50.2 and the annex of the rules of procedure, the Secretary of the Executive Board announced that credentials had been submitted by 50 observer delegations.

II. Deliberations of the Executive Board

A. The proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2009

242. The proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2009 (E/ICEF/2008/17) was introduced by the Secretary of the Executive Board. One delegation noted that the date of the joint meeting of the Executive Boards of UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, and WFP was not yet scheduled, and asked whether the fact that the dates of the 2009 first regular sessions of the Executive Boards were not consecutive might present difficulties. The Secretary responded that consultations were still ongoing concerning the most convenient dates for the joint meeting.

243. The proposed programme of work was adopted in decision 2008/13 (see annex).

B. Report on the midterm review of the medium-term strategic plan 2006-2009

244. The Executive Board considered three documents on the midterm review (MTR) of the medium-term strategic plan 2006-2009: (a) the main report, contained in document E/ICEF/2008/18; (b) a set of revised annexes to the MTSP (E/ICEF/2008/19); and (c) a background note on the proposal to extend the current MTSP by two years, to the end of 2011 (E/ICEF/2008/25).

245. The Executive Director, in her introductory remarks, thanked Member States as well as UNICEF National Committees for their valuable input to the midterm review of the MTSP. She explained that the MTR included a review of the fast-changing external environment for children and an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of UNICEF. It had also been informed by the outcome of the recent Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review. The results of the MTR provided a strong basis for further strengthening UNICEF contributions to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and fulfilling the rights of children. A two-year extension of the current plan was being proposed in order to harmonize the UNICEF strategic planning cycle with those of sister United Nations agencies and bring the subsequent MTSP (2012-2015) in line with the 2015 deadline for achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

246. Delegations thanked UNICEF for the inclusive and comprehensive MTR process, and welcomed the continued high priority given to children in low-income countries. They applauded UNICEF for the achievements so far and expressed support for the extension of the current MTSP to 2011.

247. Many delegations expressed satisfaction with the attention given to new and emerging areas, such as climate change, the nutrition and food crisis, urbanization and migration. They emphasized the responsibility of UNICEF in advocating for the rights of children in national

and international discussions around emerging areas. Some delegations requested UNICEF to work in close collaboration with other partners and the rest of the United Nations family on issues under those emerging areas, in particular climate change, that were not core to the mission of the organization.

248. Several delegations welcomed the revised results framework of the MTSP, recognizing its strong contribution to the results focus of the organization. They also called on UNICEF to further improve the proposed indicators to be defined as outcomes rather than as activities. They noted improvements in efforts to monitor the application of the human rights-based approach to programming as well as gender equality, including the addition of more robust indicators and gender-disaggregated data. A number of delegations, however, requested further improvements in the use of gender-sensitive indicators. They also recognized the need to relate the revised list of key performance indicators to the proposals of the next biennial support budget. A few delegations suggested that the MTR report should also have provided specific information on progress made towards the original targets of the MTSP, as well as an evaluation of UNICEF capacity to successfully implement the priorities of the MTSP.

249. Some delegations commended UNICEF for its role in promoting reforms within the overall United Nations system, including steps taken to harmonize business practices. UNICEF was requested to continue to play a constructive role in 'delivering as one' at the country level and to avoid the introduction of systems that could pose risks in the harmonization effort. UNICEF should also proceed with the MTSP within the context of broader United Nations reform and the recent Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review.

250. Many delegations urged UNICEF to continue to stay focused on the Millennium Development Goals. The MTSP was seen as a valuable strategic planning tool for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals; and UNICEF should ensure its operationalization at the country level and through the work of regional offices and divisions at headquarters. Furthermore, UNICEF should advocate for a greater sense of urgency among Governments and the international community, without which the child-related Millennium Development Goals would not be achieved. A number of delegations called on UNICEF to prioritize staff development to make the organization more agile, flexible and responsive, and better able to engage with Government in upstream policy work.

251. Delegations noted the daunting challenges that remained, including ensuring a continuum of care for mothers and newborn children, expanding coverage of high-impact interventions, eradicating polio, a stronger focus on persons with disabilities, youth and adolescent health, the fight against HIV and AIDS, and the challenges facing children in middle-income countries. There was also the urgent need to strengthen the capacity of national systems to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. UNICEF should develop new skills for capacity strengthening, and should deemphasize stand-alone projects. UNICEF should also work in a more systematic way with civil society organizations. Delegations looked forward to the development of the partnership strategy.

252. A number of delegations requested UNICEF to better define its cluster leadership responsibilities in emergency situations. They said they looked forward to being consulted on the concept paper that was currently under development.

253. Many delegations urged UNICEF to strengthen its work in fragile and vulnerable states. In follow-up to the Accra High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, UNICEF should support the principles established by the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development regarding good international engagement in situations of fragility, with a strong focus on the transition from emergency to early recovery.

254. The Director of Policy and Practice thanked delegations for the useful feedback and for supporting the adjustments to the MTSP, including the proposed extension. He emphasized that UNICEF strongly supported integrated approaches to ensuring the continuum of care, including combining efforts in maternal and neonatal health with maternal and young child nutrition and access to safe water, sanitation and hygiene services. Polio eradication also remained an MTSP target.

255. Baseline information for new MTSP indicators would be reflected in the next data companion, as part of the annual report of the Executive Director in 2009. Furthermore, for a more comprehensive analysis of progress made against the indicators and targets of the MTSP, delegations were requested to consider the midterm review documents in conjunction with the progress reports on the MTSP that had been provided to the Executive Board at the annual sessions, as well as the data companions, which provided information on progress against specific indicators.

256. On the issue of gender sensitivity of results, new indicators had been included in the MTSP. UNICEF would continue to generate gender-disaggregated data wherever possible, through the MTSPInfo system and the data companion.

257. The Director of Policy and Practice emphasized that UNICEF did not intend to take the lead in technical areas of climate change, but would rather advocate for adequate attention to children and women in national and international frameworks and plans of action dealing with the environment, as well as working to promote adaptation and strengthen awareness through existing focus areas of the MTSP. Provisions of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review had also been explicitly reflected in the midterm review, including in the revised results matrix and key performance indicators in areas such as South-South cooperation, support to national capacity-building, gender mainstreaming and countries in transition. The action plan on gender mainstreaming was being formulated and would be presented to the Executive Board at its next session.

C. Report on the implementation of the 'modified system for the allocation of regular resources for programmes' approved by the Executive Board in 1997

258. Deputy Executive Director Saad Houry introduced the report on the implementation of the 'modified system for the allocation of regular resources for programmes' (E/ICEF/2008/20) and tabled a proposal that would enable UNICEF to maintain country programmes in upper-middle-income countries, as defined by a new and variable gross national income (GNI) per capita threshold based on the World Bank country classification. The proposal to adopt the international 'high-income country' threshold ($11,456 GNI per capita in 2007) as the graduation point for allocation of regular resources for country programmes, instead of the current upper limit for lower-middle-income countries ($3,705 GNI per capita in 2007), would significantly delay the graduation point and enable UNICEF to continue allocating regular resources in affected countries.

259. Delegations supported the proposal and highlighted the importance of continued engagement of UNICEF with upper-middle-income countries and allocation of minimum regular resource allocations for such programme cooperation. The delegations noted that many of the most common factors that threatened children's rights and created vulnerabilities among children, such as child poverty, governance issues and lack of institutional capacities, violence against children and women, marginalization and exclusion, income and gender disparities and the effects of migration, were still prevalent in those countries.

260. Delegations agreed that UNICEF should continue to focus on least developed countries (LDCs), particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, where gains on the Millennium Development Goals and the MTSP focus areas could be greatest. One delegation suggested that the criteria for the allocation of regular resources should also include weighted indicators on nutrition, education and disparities.

261. A number of delegations sought clarification on the medium- and long-term impact of the proposed graduation system on the allocation of regular resources as well as its implications on human and financial resources and overall achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. They requested UNICEF to provide further information about the projected impact of delaying the graduation point, since there would be more countries receiving the minimum allocation. Some members suggested that the Executive Board consider the option of reviewing and closely monitoring the impact of the new graduation point.

262. In addition to modifying the GNI graduation threshold, a number of delegations fron countries in the upper-middle-income bracket proposed raising the current $600,000 minimum allocation of regular resources to $750,000. Delegations agreed that under-five mortality rates should not be used as criteria for graduation, but should continue to be used in deciding the calculated share of regular resources to each country. Some delegations requested UNICEF to develop and pursue more innovative and effective options for cooperation modalities in the upper-middle-income countries, including domestic resource mobilization efforts and formation of National Committees for UNICEF in the transition period before graduation.

263. The Executive Board held extensive informal consultations aimed at fully understanding the implications of the proposed changes to the minimum regular resource allocation. A number of Executive Board members reminded delegations of the existing guidelines for allocating resources as contained in decision 1997/17. The criteria for allocating minimum levels of regular resources was not linked to inflation. Explaining that the formula was progressive in the distribution of regular resources, the Deputy Executive Director noted that the proposed changes in allocations to upper-middle-income countries were only incremental and minor, since these countries were already receiving the minimum regular resources. He advised against the use of other factors in determining share allocations, since the suggested indicators were unstable, incomparable across countries and limited in usefulness. He concluded that, overall, there were far more net gains for all countries, including the LDCs and sub-Saharan Africa, in simplifying the formula and moving the graduation to a higher level.

264. The Executive Board adopted the draft decision (2008/15) on the 'modified system for the allocation of regular resources for programmes' (see annex).

265. Before the adoption of decision 2008/15, one delegation pointed out an inconsistency in the translation of the term 'multi-country programmes' in the Spanish version of the decision. Following the adoption of the decision, several delegations commented on the intense discussions that had taken place and thanked the members of the Executive Board and the Bureau for their understanding of the various points of view of delegations.

D. Proposals for UNICEF programme cooperation

(a) Approval of country programme documents discussed at the annual session of 2008

266. The President stated that in accordance with decisions 2002/4 and 2006/19, the Executive Board had discussed five draft CPDs for full programme cycles at the annual session of 2008 (Benin, the Congo, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan). The comments had been shared with the respective country offices and the draft CPDs had been revised as appropriate and posted on the UNICEF website within six weeks of the session. The CPDs were to be approved on a no-objection basis unless at least five members had informed the secretariat in writing of their wish to bring a CPD to the Executive Board for further discussion. As the secretariat did not receive any such requests, the Executive Board approved the revised CPDs for Benin, the Congo, Niger, Nigeria and Sudan.

(b and c) Draft country programme documents and midterm reviews of country programmes

Eastern and Southern Africa

267. The Regional Director introduced the summary of the midterm reviews of country programmes for the Eastern and Southern African region (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.14) and the draft

CPDs for Angola (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.18) and Kenya (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.20) and a draft short-duration programme for Burundi (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.19).

268. The representative of **Kenya** highlighted the collaboration of UNICEF with the Government, affirming that Kenya fully endorsed the 2009-2013 UNICEF country programme, which responded to the national priorities set out in the Vision 2030 Medium Term Plan. Noting that UNICEF had introduced social budgeting to enhance participation at local levels in planning and resource allocation and that the framework had gained government acceptance to be mainstreamed within the national social budget policy, the Kenyan representative emphasized that such engagement significantly contributed to the steady expansion of the country's gross domestic product.

269. Several delegations welcomed the alignment of the Kenya country programme with the national Vision 2030 Medium Term Plan and with the Kenya Joint Assistance Strategy developed by donors, and welcomed the strong focus on the most disadvantaged geographical areas and the most vulnerable groups. Delegations applauded the response by UNICEF Kenya to address the effects of the post-election violence, stating that UNICEF was one of the few agencies in Kenya that had a contingency plan in place. They asked that high priority be given to orphans, children and families left homeless and to education, which had been disrupted as a result of the violence. Some delegations called for further improvement in 'delivering as one' in Kenya, and encouraged a more intense collaboration among agencies, such as that between UNICEF and the United Nations Fund for Women on gender issues. Urging UNICEF to play an even greater and more visible role, delegations also encouraged the country team to build greater awareness of children's rights in Kenya.

270. Delegations congratulated UNICEF Angola for its transparency in carrying out activities with donors and welcomed its focus on areas of national priority, particularly on reform and policy. Urging the strengthening of continuity in the education sector, delegations asked to see fewer 'operations' and more of a normative function for UNICEF in Angola. One delegation praised the quality of work carried out in Angola, despite the challenges posed by high prices and difficulties in recruitment of staff. In response, the Regional Director noted that the difficulty in attracting and retaining staff was a common challenge faced by all United Nations agencies in Angola.

271. Delegations welcomed the efforts made by UNICEF Burundi to align and harmonize the country programme and the UNDAF with relevant existing national plans. One delegation noted that the national plan for orphans and vulnerable children in Burundi was aligned with the objectives of the poverty reduction strategy paper. Other delegations drew particular attention to the country's peace-building priorities and noted that the support provided by the United Nations funds and programmes was of great importance to the peace-building efforts in Burundi. They asked that more attention be given to monitoring and assessment systems and to promoting joint missions.

West and Central Africa

272. The Regional Director introduced the draft CPD for Côte d'Ivoire (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.21) and the short-duration draft CPD for Mauritania (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.22).

273. The representative of **Mauritania** stated that in 2008 the country experienced a change in its executive branch. Noting that the current situation was a transitional phase, he said the country was fully engaged in consolidation of democracy. The Government of Mauritania remained convinced that democracy and good governance and the protection of human rights were the major keys for development. It was planning an open dialogue to achieve a national consensus to improve the current situation of the country, with the participation of the United Nations, the African Union, the League of Arab States, and the European Union. Commending UNICEF for its support for reducing high rates of maternal and child mortality, he said his country welcomed the two-year programme, as its implementation focused on three key areas: establishing a positive environment for children; building human capacities; and promoting access to services. Noting that the programme had the support of the United Republic of Tanzania, the current chair of the African Union, he reaffirmed the willingness of the Government of Mauritania to continue its cooperation with UNICEF.

274. The representative of **Côte d'Ivoire** stated that his country was only now emerging from a crisis that had lasted for six years. The improved political climate allowed the Government to act on several fronts with UNICEF support. Achievements included the adoption in 2007 of an accelerated strategy for survival and development of children in order to reduce the high rates of child and maternal mortality; combating HIV/AIDS through growing access to services and treatment to prevent the transmission from mother to child; establishing a national programme for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of child combatants; and a programme to protect vulnerable children and adolescents to reduce violations of the rights of children. Congratulating UNICEF for almost tripling its financial envelope between 2006 and 2008, he said the Côte d'Ivoire Government required more resources to address the great social needs due to the post-crisis environment.

The Americas and the Caribbean

275. The Regional Director introduced the summary of the midterm reviews of country programmes for the Americas and Caribbean region (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.15 and E/ICEF/2008/P/L.15/Corr.1) and the draft country programme documents for Haiti (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.23) and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.24 and E/ICEF/2008/P/L.24/Corr.1), emphasizing the importance of the strategic engagement of UNICEF in middle-income countries and the organization's role in influencing effective public policies for children.

276. The representative of **Haiti** expressed thanks to UNICEF for its support, particularly following the latest series of hurricanes that had ravaged the country. She appealed to UNICEF to consider increasing staff and resources assigned to Haiti, enhance technical support,

strengthen partnerships with the various agencies operating on the ground, and intensify existing programmes to assist in the recovery efforts.

277. These comments were reflected by another delegation, which urged UNICEF to work in a more coordinated manner with other agencies, and particularly with the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti. Another speaker said that his delegation looked forward to more regular consultations at working level on mother and child health, HIV/AIDS, water and sanitation and education. He stated that his country and other actors in Haiti would increasingly be supporting efforts to focus on basic education and work with out-of-school youth, and he hoped that the final CPD would discuss the roles of the various parties in helping Haiti in these critical areas.

278. Referring to the ongoing process of economic, social and cultural change for a new development model in his country, the representative of the **Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela** expressed support for the implementation of the new country programme as part of joint efforts to ensure the well-being of the people of the country and achieve the Millennium Development Goals. He praised the participatory way in which the CPD had been elaborated, saying that the process had allowed reflection on the situation of children and adolescents and discussion on the institutional and policy challenges needed to guarantee the protection of children. He reaffirmed that children and adolescents are a key priority of the national development plan, and that a multidimensional approach to tackling poverty had been taken by his Government to address the causes of vulnerability, including inequalities.

279. The representative of **Guatemala,** speaking of the regional summary of midterm reviews of country programmes, which included his country, said that the presence of the United Nations, and particularly UNICEF, was very welcome and necessary, given the persistent inequalities and low indicators that exist in major pockets of society. He commended the continued advocacy efforts of UNICEF to improve public policies for children. He applauded the recent trend to move from a project-based to a programme-based approach, the fact that UNICEF adheres to priorities established by Governments and has a record of working closely with the rest of the United Nations system. Finally, he reiterated his country's commitment to making children a top priority, particularly through the social cohesion programme of Guatemala.

280. Another delegation expressed support for the regional emphasis on the rights of indigenous children and Afro-descendants.

East Asia and the Pacific

281. The Regional Director introduced the summary of midterm reviews of country programmes (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.16) and the draft CPD for Timor-Leste (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.26).

282. The representative of **Timor-Leste** confirmed that the country programme was aligned with the priorities and strategies of the Government, and that it was developed through a highly

consultative and interactive process with key stakeholders, including the Government, NGOs, United Nations agencies and other development partners. The representative said that the country had signed all the major human rights instruments, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols, and that the Government was working with UNICEF to jointly address the observations and recommendations of the Committee on the Rights of the Child.

283. Several delegations, commenting on the CPD, stressed the importance of a focus on rural water supply and sanitation, health, juvenile justice, education, capacity-building, and the use of sports as a tool of conflict resolution. They encouraged UNICEF to focus on upstream work on violence against children, while highlighting the need to strengthen harmonization. Delegations emphasized the importance of disaggregated data on girls and boys in order to measure progress towards gender equality. One delegation said that the country programme should address issues such as outreach to the children in remote areas, finding qualified health service staff, and focusing on unemployed young people who can make a contribution to conflict and crisis prevention.

Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States

284. The Regional Director presented the midterm review of country programmes (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.17), which included nine countries, and the short-duration country programme document for Bosnia and Herzegovina (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.25).

285. A number of delegations commended the work of UNICEF in improving the situation of children in areas of health, education and protection. Many delegations noted that the midterm review presented a window of opportunity to further consolidate the social dimensions of transition in the middle-income countries and to make adjustments in prioritizing emerging challenges. Delegations expressed the readiness of their countries to continue cooperating with UNICEF in the realization of rights and in advancing the standard of living in the region.

286. Several delegations commented on the midterm reviews of country programmes, which included their countries.

287. The representative of **Uzbekistan** provided a brief overview of his Government's efforts to improve the health and well-being of children, including through cooperation with UNICEF in planning and implementing social sector reforms. Data from the Multiple Indicator Cluster Surveys had shown a decrease in infant and child morbidity and mortality. The representative mentioned results of cooperative work in national nutrition and HIV/AIDS strategies and the support of UNICEF in developing the 2007 national law on the guarantees of children's rights.

288. Expressing his Government's appreciation for continuing UNICEF cooperation, the representative of **Serbia** praised the increased emphasis given by UNICEF to supporting policy, especially through the implementation of laws relating to social inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalized social groups. These include, among other groups, Roma, children

with disabilities and children from poor families. He highlighted the need for coordinated efforts of all stakeholders. It was important, furthermore, to ensure the availability of services for children and families at the community level.

289. The representative of **Croatia** stressed the transformation of the presence of UNICEF, which now generates resources from the private sector. This has allowed continued work with the Government, the private sector and leading national experts on promoting new services for children and families. This experience is being replicated in many middle-income countries in the region. Children in the region faced several emerging threats, including the misuse of new technologies such as internet and digital cameras, which is connected with increasing sexual exploitation of children. Croatia and UNICEF will launch a campaign to end such 'electronic' violence against children.

290. The representative of **Montenegro** highlighted the strong cooperation between UNICEF and his country and said that efforts were needed to further tailor the cooperation programme to the new realities of Montenegro and its path towards integration with the European Union. The UNICEF programme should focus on social inclusion, child protection and reform of the child care system. Cross-cutting emphasis should be placed on strengthened social planning, improved monitoring of rights, data collection, and evidence-based advocacy. Special attention should be given to Roma children and children with disabilities.

291. The representative of **Azerbaijan** emphasized the strides made in children's well-being in several areas, including reduction of child and infant mortality, thanks in large part to the allocation of resources to children from the State's oil revenues. The Government is currently developing new strategies on sustainable development, which will be aligned with the Millennium Development Goals, particularly in health, education and social protection. The representative expressed concern over the situation of children displaced because of the unresolved conflict with Armenia.

292. Responding to comments by the representative of Uzbekistan, the representative of ILO mentioned challenges pertaining to ratification and implementation by Uzbekistan of the ILO Conventions pertaining to child labour, and said that it was important to involve the key social partners in combating child labour. In response, the Regional Director said that UNICEF was working closely with the Government of Uzbekistan in addressing that issue.

293. In conclusion, the Regional Director encouraged regional exchange of technical experience and improved programming in priority areas as a means of follow-up to the recommendations of the midterm reviews.

Middle East and North Africa

294. The Regional Director introduced the one-year short-duration CPD for Lebanon (E/ICEF/2008/P/L.27 and E/ICEF/2008/P/L.27/Corr.1). While implementing this country

programme, UNICEF will continue to review the planning process with the United Nations country team, the Government and partners to produce a sound, strategic five-year UNDAF.

295. The representative of **Lebanon** commended the work of UNICEF in easing the suffering of Lebanese children who were victims of the conflict. He stressed the importance of the nationwide MICS recently launched by the Prime Minister and UNICEF Regional Director. This survey will determine access to and effectiveness of social services, and progress regarding development indicators related to the well-being of children. The data, which will be available in 2009, will equip the national policy makers and development assistance agencies with new information to support the elaboration of longer-term national socio-economic strategies. He further stressed the importance of the UNDAF and its alignment with the National Framework for the Recovery, Reconstruction and Reform Plan of Lebanon.

296. The Executive Board approved decisions 2008/16 and 2008/17 on the draft country programme documents (see annex).

(d) Recommendation for approval of additional regular resources for approved country programmes

297. The Executive Board had before it document E/ICEF/2008/P/L.28. The recommendation was approved in decision 2008/18 (see annex).

E. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: Progress report on the 2006–2008 programme of work and proposal for a one-year extension

298. The progress report on activities of the Innocenti Research Centre (IRC) for 2006-2008 was presented by the Director of the Innocenti Research Centre, along with a proposal for a one-year extension of the programme. The extension was proposed in order to align the Centre's programme with the UNICEF strategic planning process and the biennial support budget, within the broader framework of the organization's research function.

299. Delegations, expressing support for the work of the Centre and endorsing the proposed one-year extension, highlighted the contributions made by the Centre over the 20 years of its operation to the mandate of UNICEF, including through knowledge generation and brokering, capacity-building, policy development and advocacy for children. Several delegations noted the distinct contribution of IRC to the upstream work of UNICEF, including in children's rights and child protection, in social policy, and in emerging issues. The value of research was also mentioned in specific areas, such as transitional justice, protection from trafficking, sexual exploitation and armed conflict, child poverty and social inclusion, and children and migration.

300. Delegations emphasized the importance of capturing lessons learned and best practices as a means to improve the design of cooperation programmes and as a basis for policy recommendations. IRC's research was seen to contribute to global advocacy and policy, as well as to mobilizing resources for children. Several delegations highlighted the convening role of

the Centre and the strategic enhancement of its partnerships with academic institutions and research networks in developing countries.

301. Delegations commented on the importance of regular and predictable funding of IRC's work, including through the renewal of support by the Centre's main funding partner, the Government of Italy; through new commitments by other donors to maintain and further develop collaboration; and through increased funding engagement by UNICEF. Delegations supported the one-year extension of the IRC's programme and welcomed the role the Centre would continue to play in the UNICEF research agenda. Several delegations said they looked forward to receiving feedback during 2009 on the progress made towards strengthening the overall research function of UNICEF.

302. The IRC Director thanked the delegations for supporting the contributions of the Centre to the work of UNICEF and to national policy development. In her closing remarks the Executive Director affirmed the importance of IRC's research for the work of UNICEF, expressing appreciation for the Executive Board's strong interest in the work of the Centre and in the research function of the organization.

303. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/19 (see annex).

F. Recent meetings of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Programme Coordinating Board: recommendations and decisions of relevance to UNICEF

304. The Senior Advisor on AIDS presented the recommendations and decisions of relevance to UNICEF at the most recent Programme Coordinating Board meetings (E/ICEF/2008/24). The issues included the status of implementation of the Global Task Team (GTT) recommendations and follow-up to the GTT independent assessment; the collaboration with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; the gender sensitivity of AIDS responses; the cycle of the UNAIDS unified budget and work plan; the Second Independent Evaluation of UNAIDS; and the process for nomination of the Executive Director of UNAIDS.

305. The Senior Advisor highlighted examples of progress in scale-up of national responses on children and AIDS and underscored the active involvement of UNICEF in the development of the Memorandum of Understanding between UNAIDS and the Global Fund. She also provided examples of UNICEF work on gender equity and equality in the area of prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of AIDS.

306. Noting that AIDS was both a development as well as a health issue, delegations commended UNICEF work on children and AIDS and expressed their continued support. They acknowledged UNICEF efforts to increase access to PMTCT services but urged partners to further accelerate access to services for women in rural communities. Delegations encouraged continued focus on minimum standards of social protection and expressed interest in learning more about UNICEF involvement in the development of the gender country pilots. They

emphasized the need for the United Nations to deliver as one on AIDS and looked forward to receiving an update on UNICEF support to the joint United Nations teams on AIDS. The delegations expressed their support for the four-year planning framework of the UNAIDS unified budget and work plan and welcomed the Memorandum of Understanding between UNAIDS and the Global Fund. They encouraged UNICEF to play an active role in the Second Independent Evaluation of UNAIDS.

G. Medium-term strategic plan: planned financial estimates for 2008-2011

307. The document E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.5 was introduced by the Deputy Director of Finance (Division of Financial and Administrative Management). The planned financial estimates for the period 2008-2011 provide a basis for determining the level of regular resources programme submissions for approval in 2009.

308. One delegation expressed concern that the expenditure estimates presented in the plan did not reflect the five focus areas of the UNICEF MTSP, and that expenditure planned for the protection of child rights was insufficient. Clarifications were sought by several delegations on the size of the cash balance and the roll-forward of significant fund balances from prior years. Clarification was also sought on the optimal level of the cash balance of UNICEF, on why projected expenditures exceeded projected income over the period 2008-2011 and on whether this trend would continue.

309. Several delegations requested more information on the proposed $30 million annual transfer to the reserve for the after-service health insurance (ASHI) liability in 2010 and 2011, with one delegation noting that the reserve need not be fully funded — a $10 million allocation was sufficient. Another delegation requested clarification on why UNICEF was proposing an increase in ASHI reserves of only $30 million each year when the liability had increased from $292 million to $483 million between 2005 and 2007. Information was also requested on what other funding mechanisms UNICEF would consider in the future, such as a percentage allocation from salary payments to cover the full ASHI liability.

310. The Deputy Executive Director responded to the comments. Regarding the concern raised on the lack of presentation of planned expenditures according to the five focus areas of the MTSP, he said that this information would be provided in the MTSP document. The planned financial estimates document was not intended to show the allocation of funds to the various outcome areas.

311. On the issue of the high cash balance, he responded that a large proportion of the cash balance, approximately 76 per cent, related to other resources and Reserves and Trust Funds, and that only 24 per cent related to regular resources available for programming by UNICEF. With regard to the optimal level for the cash balance of UNICEF, he said that because UNICEF cannot borrow funds and might not always be sure of when resources will be received, it would not be prudent to maintain the minimum liquidity balance suggested by the UNICEF liquidity policy. A more realistic benchmark was three months of expenditures, approximately $300

million. Regarding the roll-over of significant fund balances, he explained that UNICEF was trying to address this by increasing projected expenditures as presented in the planned financial estimates at a faster rate than projected income. He further noted that the continuation of this trend would depend on how the income, cash and fund balances of UNICEF would fare in future years.

312. Regarding the ASHI reserve, he explained that the full actuary report on ASHI had only just been received at the time the planned financial estimates were being developed and that UNICEF had not had sufficient time to analyse the reasons behind the large increase in the liability. Once the report was studied further, UNICEF might seek to increase the ASHI reserve in future years, requesting approval from the Executive Board for such an increase. He noted that the adoption of International Public Sector Accounting Standards in 2010 would require UNICEF to reflect the ASHI liability in the financial statements and that it would be important to ensure that the liability was as closely funded as possible. Regarding possible financing mechanisms, he indicated that UNICEF would seek to harmonize its approach with those of other United Nations agencies.

313. The Executive Board approved the framework of planned financial estimates for 2008–2011 and the preparation of programme expenditure submissions to the Executive Board of up to $915 million from regular resources in 2009. In addition, the Executive Board approved the annual transfer of $30 million to the ASHI reserve for 2010-2011.

314. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/20 (see annex).

H. Additional United Nations-mandated security measures for UNICEF personnel and premises

315. The report (E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.8) was introduced by the Director of Emergency Programmes.

316. Several delegations expressed their support for funding the additional UNICEF costs for security as presented in the document, citing the increase in threats to United Nations personnel and premises in recent years.

317. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/21 (see annex).

I. Thematic funding as a financial instrument in support of the UNICEF medium-term strategic plan

318. The Director ad interim of the Public Sector Alliances and Resource Mobilization Office presented the report (E/ICEF/2008/22).

319. Highlighting the strategic importance of thematic funds, in line with recommendations of the Triennial Comprehensive Policy Review of Operational Activities for Development of

the United Nations System, for increasing the flexibility and predictability of funding, he noted that UNICEF received a total of $1,378 million in thematic funding between 2003 and 2007. He emphasized that thematic funding directly supported the goals and objectives of the MTSP, entailed lower transactions costs, and allowed for longer-term planning and implementation of programmes. Thematic funding directly supported the results-based approach by shifting the focus from inputs and activities to outcomes and results.

320. A number of delegations commended UNICEF for the results it had achieved with the support of thematic funds and agreed that thematic contributions were the most efficient and flexible type of non-core funding. A few speakers emphasized the need to ensure better analytical and results-oriented reporting and called on UNICEF to explore ways to build on some of the existing best practices.

321. One delegation expressed concern that thematic funding should not distract UNICEF from focusing on its mandate, adding that it was reassuring that thematic funding was directed only at the key results areas of the strategic plan already approved by the Executive Board.

322. Delegations expressed interest in what measures UNICEF undertook to attract more donors to giving thematic funds and whether any evaluation activities were planned for the funds. In response, the secretariat informed the delegations of the annual thematic consultations and encouraged donors to participate, adding that the flexible nature of the funds allowed allocation for evaluation activities. UNICEF would use the opportunity provided by the 10 organizational improvement initiatives to enhance reporting on thematic funds.

323. Several delegations said they would continue to provide thematic funding to UNICEF focus areas; one delegation indicated that it would explore the possibility of contributing thematically. Deputy Executive Director Hilde Frafjord Johnson thanked the delegations and reiterated the fact that thematic funding directly supported the aims of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action.

J. Private Sector Division: Financial reports and statements for the year ending 31 December 2007

324. The Director of Private Fundraising and Partnerships presented the report (E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.6).

325. Several delegations commended UNICEF and the National Committees for UNICEF for the financial results achieved in 2007 compared to the budget, and in particular the increase of 11 per cent in regular resources. One delegation questioned the decrease of 4 per cent in other resources, and another highlighted the importance of rigorous cost control to ensure a maximum use of funds raised for country programmes.

326. The Director noted that it is difficult to accurately budget for other resources, particularly for emergency-related income, and assured the Executive Board that rigorous

management of operating expenses would ensure that programmes draw maximum benefit from funds raised.

327. One delegation requested that more detailed card and product sales data be included as part of the financial report, and that a written report on the outcomes of the strategic review of cards and products be provided. The Director noted that as card sales are managed by National Committees on a consignment basis, reporting delays impact the ability of PFP to report detailed sales information in the financial report. This will be addressed as part of the strategic review, a briefing on which would be given to the Executive Board during the PFP budget discussion at the first regular session of 2009.

328. One delegation noted that the expanded PFP now incorporates elements of the UNICEF Support Budget as well as its own budget, and requested a consolidated overview. The Director noted that this information would be presented to the Executive Board beginning with reports covering 2008.

K. Report on the evaluation function and findings and recommendations of major evaluations in UNICEF

329. The Director of Evaluation presented the report (E/ICEF/2008/21) prepared in accordance with the new evaluation policy (E/ICEF/2008/4) and Executive Board decision 2008/14. He acknowledged the challenges in applying the new evaluation policy, especially within the context of the decentralized structure of the UNICEF evaluation function. An executive directive would be issued to provide guidance on implementation of the new evaluation policy.

330. Welcoming the report, delegations supported the UNICEF commitment to strengthening evaluation at all levels. Delegations stressed the importance of evaluation as a tool for learning. It was recognized that the evaluation function was a central tool for informing and enriching strategic management decisions and for helping to promote a culture of learning and improvement at all levels of the organization. Comments were made on the importance of the evaluation oversight function to ensuring accountability.

331. Delegations welcomed the active contribution of UNICEF to the work of the United Nations Evaluation Group, which aimed to harmonize the evaluation function within the United Nations system. Support was expressed for UNICEF involvement in several joint evaluations as an opportunity for mutual learning. One delegation noted that there was no reference to the efforts undertaken in West and Central Africa to strengthen the evaluation function.

332. Delegations stressed that UNICEF, to ensure evaluation quality, should continue to work with partners to strengthen evaluation methodology, especially in joint evaluations. UNICEF was also urged to propose concrete steps to further improve the quality of planning for evaluations. It was suggested that the biennial work plan should reflect the prioritization and

selection of evaluations and demonstrate the impact of the new allocation of human and financial resources.

333. UNICEF was urged to proactively ensure that evaluation results, together with management responses, were accessible and shared broadly. Several delegations recommended reinforcing the management responses to evaluations, with more information provided on the use of evaluation results. It was suggested that UNICEF establish a solid tracking system for monitoring the implementation of management responses.

334. In response, the Director of Evaluation explained that many concrete actions had already been taken to improve evaluation quality at headquarters and regional levels: at the Evaluation Office, a skills assessment exercise to improve staff evaluation skills; the rating of reports as an incentive to submitting quality reports; and an upgrade of the evaluation website. The evaluation function in the West and Central African region had been strengthened by the appointment of highly qualified staff. Stressing the importance of strategic planning to prioritizing evaluations, he also emphasized the importance of management responses for evaluations and said that guidance would be given in the executive directive.

335. Confirming that strengthening the evaluation function was a priority for management, Deputy Executive Director Omar Abdi noted that the concrete steps taken to strengthen evaluation would be reported in the annual report of the evaluation function but that follow-up to evaluations would be best included in programme documents.

336. The Executive Director emphasized the importance of investing in evaluation and stressed the need to focus on how the results of evaluations could be used more strategically. Evaluation should be built into the way UNICEF developed programmes so that evaluation could contribute to strategic knowledge within the organization and also help countries to assess the effectiveness of their programmes and the way they allocate resources.

337. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/22 (see annex).

L. Internal audit

338. The Director of the Office of Internal Audit (OIA) introduced the report on internal audit activities in 2007 (E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.7 and E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.7/Corr.1).

339. The Executive Board also had before it, for information, the response by UNICEF management to key issues identified in the annual report, introduced by Deputy Executive Director Omar Abdi.

340. The Deputy Executive Director congratulated OIA on the high rating achieved in the quality assessment done by the Institute of Internal Auditors. Management agreed with all observations made by OIA and would ensure implementation of its recommendations through

immediate follow-up with the concerned offices, aiming to address underlying or structural causes that give rise to recurrent audit findings.

341. Noting that the late signing of annual work plans developed by UNICEF country offices in cooperation with host Governments often caused further audit observations, he said the underlying condition would be addressed through the introduction by UNICEF of a more dynamic programming process. Other initiatives would help to address similar patterns of findings, through improved performance management, better risk management, and the introduction of a single enterprise resource planning system for UNICEF.

342. Several delegations said that the review and discussion of the OIA annual report allowed the Executive Board to carry out its oversight function. Two delegations appreciated the increased detail of the OIA annual report, including the refined risk-based methodology used by OIA. Another delegation welcomed the updating of the accountability framework. One delegation said that OIA needed to carry out more audits. Expressing appreciation for what had already been accomplished with limited resources, the delegation noted a shortfall against what was planned.

343. Several delegations expressed concern about a number of weak areas identified in the report, especially related to programme and supply management, and urged management to address those promptly. Another delegation asked about efforts to harmonize software with sister agencies. One delegation highlighted the increasing number of fraud cases, while acknowledging that the anti-fraud policy might have encouraged more reporting of such cases. The delegation also expressed concern about the fact that OIA had several vacant positions.

344. The Deputy Executive Director said that audit recommendations had been implemented with increasing speed. The Director of OIA further commented that the ratings given in 2007 had been harmonized with those of other United Nations organizations and therefore could not be directly compared to the ratings given to offices in 2006. Moreover, risk-based auditing implied that OIA audits were not carried out randomly but rather focused on areas where a desk review had already identified weaknesses. Such considerations should be kept in mind when analysing audit statistics. He emphasized that not all allegations of fraud resulted in the establishment of wrongdoing. OIA would in the next report provide a breakdown of the outcome of the investigations. The Director of OIA added that because of the vacancies, and because some staff members had been assigned to conduct urgent investigations, a number of audits had to be transferred to 2008. However, all the vacancies, except for one position, had been filled in the meantime.

345. On the question of software harmonization, the Deputy Executive Director said that UNICEF had chosen SAP software over Oracle, each of which was used by roughly half of United Nations organizations, to replace ProMS for field operations because SAP was already used at headquarters.

346. The Executive Director concluded by noting that management closely collaborated with OIA, which had received new additional posts. A number of initiatives, all combined, demonstrated efforts by UNICEF to improve management practices: increased anti-fraud measures; the creation of the UNICEF Office of Ethics; closer coordination between audit and evaluation; the establishment of a now completely external audit committee; and the very good results of the quality assessment of OIA.

347. The Executive Board adopted decision 2008/23 (see annex).

M. Other matters

348. One delegation requested information on UNICEF emergency activities over the previous six months, particularly in China, Haiti, India, Myanmar and Nepal. The secretariat said it would organize a separate briefing on the matter.

349. Referring to the document presented to the Executive Board for information, the "Report on the funds allocated from regular resources to cover overexpenditures for completed projects financed from other resources" (E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.4), one delegation noted that relatively high sums of regular resources had been used to cover overexpenditures on completed projects, adding that it was preferable that donors who had initiated those projects also cover the overexpenditures. Deputy Executive Director Omar Abdi replied that such expenditures occurred largely as a result of currency fluctuations following the pledges and commitments made by Member States, and that UNICEF needed to meet those income differences with regular resources, the only funds available to cover such overexpenditures. This has been the practice for many years.

Special focus session on policy and advocacy for children's rights

350. The special focus session was organized by UNICEF to enhance awareness of the organization's engagement in cross-cutting upstream policy analysis and advocacy. Presentations by Government representatives from Colombia, Kazakhstan, Malawi and Mongolia were followed by a discussion on how UNICEF could leverage results for children through long-term engagement in evidence-based policy analysis and advocacy.

351. Following introductory remarks by the President of the Executive Board, the Executive Director introduced the special focus session, underlining the importance of engaging in policy discussions and the impact of upstream policy work on children and families. Highlighting the contribution of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, she noted that MTSP focus area 5 supported the organization's work in other sectors and focus areas. Upstream policy initiatives were under way in over 100 country offices. Thematic funding had provided strategic support to focus area 5.

352. The Inspector-General and Chief of the Public Ministry of Colombia, Mr. Edgardo José Maya Villazón, presented an overview of 'Facts and Rights' (Hechos y Derechos) in Colombia

– a strategy to promote the centrality of children, adolescents and youth in municipal and departmental public policies. The Facts and Rights programme centrally reviewed the development plans of 1,100 municipalities and 32 departments to ensure progress for children. With strategic support from UNICEF, the programme promoted laws to support and protect children, and increased the active involvement of leaders in improving child outcomes through public policies and budgets, while also building awareness of child rights. Results included increased access to basic sanitation and drinking water, and continued work on birth registration. However, the sustained support was essential, as limited data, child disabilities, violence against children, and chronic malnutrition persisted in the region.

353. The presentation by the Minister of Women and Child Development of Malawi, H.E. Mrs. Anna Andrew Namathanga Kachikho, focused on evidence-based policy development for social protection, especially social cash transfers in Malawi. She gave a brief overview of Government leadership and coordination in the process of designing the national social protection policy of Malawi to reduce poverty and vulnerability. Currently, 29,000 children in five districts benefited from the country's social cash transfer scheme, established in 2006 to reduce poverty for the poor and vulnerable households. Positive results included improved health status, better access to health care, and reduction in wasting in beneficiary households. The commitment from the Government, strong partnerships among Ministries and with UNICEF and others, access to financial resources and technical assistance, solid communication and monitoring all contributed to strengthening the social cash transfer scheme. This programme aimed to complete the design of a national social protection programme and to scale up the cash transfer scheme, to reach 820,000 children in 28 districts by 2012 at a cost of $52 million a year, to be financed through a social protection basket fund. In closing, the speaker acknowledged the support of UNICEF and stated that Malawi aimed to promote social protection as a core component of its poverty reduction strategy.

354. H.E. Mrs. Gulzhana Karagussova, Member of Majilis of the Parliament of Kazakhstan and Chairperson of the Committee for Finances and Budget, presented the experience of Kazakhstan in introducing child-friendly budgeting. She noted that the Government, recognizing that the cost of social reform was high, had prioritized social stability, development, and efficient and transparent budgets, and emphasized the importance of investing in children and establishing a comprehensive system of social protection for women and children. She also noted that a new child-focused approach aimed for efficiency, transparency and accountability in budget processes and laws, along with a comprehensive assessment system. She recalled the strategic contribution of a conference on social programming for children and families, jointly initiated by Parliament and UNICEF, at which delegations from the region considered budgets in terms of their effectiveness for children. In closing, the speaker noted the importance of further research and of building awareness and support among high-level decision makers. She also called for further technical assistance and expertise from UNICEF and continued partnership in improving budgetary legislation and laws, especially to promote early child development, and in working towards child-friendly cities.

355. The Permanent Representative of Mongolia to the United Nations, H.E. Ms. Enkhtsetseg Ochir, presented the social policy approach of Mongolia to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. She noted that the transition of Mongolia from central planning to a market economy had led to the breakdown of basic social services throughout the country, and a decline in the performance of key child indicators, including increased abuse, neglect, exploitation and trafficking of children. She further explained that the national plan of action for protection and development of children 2002-2010 included legal reforms to protect child rights, and recalled that workshops organized by UNICEF for practitioners and decision makers supported the implementation of a policy for child-friendly schools. Ms. Enkhtsetseg acknowledged UNICEF support to Government efforts to raise awareness and the use of iodized salt in rural areas, which had increased from 0 to 80 per cent, and noted that legislative reform had standardized the age of criminal responsibility at 16 years. She laid out a pattern of reforms in Mongolia: a concept is first introduced at a workshop with advocacy support from UNICEF; then a situation/needs assessment is undertaken; efforts are made to raise awareness among policy and decision makers; and finally, implementation and monitoring take place. Stressing that partnerships were essential for progress, the speaker reaffirmed that the Government of Mongolia was strongly committed to the rights of the child and the Millennium Development Goals, and thanked UNICEF for its support.

356. In the discussion following the presentations, several delegations acknowledged the value of sharing concrete examples of making progress through upstream engagement towards the goal of achieving children's rights. Several delegations expressed support and gratitude for the organization's shift from service delivery to upstream engagement, and welcomed further partnerships with UNICEF in influencing policy and budgets in favour of children. Several delegations emphasized the importance of adequate budget allocation and decentralization, and requested additional information from the speakers on these topics. One delegation responded to the speaker from Kazakhstan by relating a similar experience in social budgeting, in which UNICEF support and technical assistance helped to foster participation of local communities and civil society organizations in planning and decision making, including the introduction of observatories aimed at targeting the needs of children. Delegations highlighted the importance of mainstreaming a gender perspective, and welcomed UNICEF support in assessing disparities in access to basic social services and in suggesting policy responses to disparities. Delegations also recognized a need to address supply-side constraints, including capacity-building.

357. The guest speakers responded to selected questions with particular focus on gender mainstreaming and decentralization, giving specific examples from their countries and highlighting UNICEF support for policy change to promote child rights and improve access to quality social services for boys and girls.

358. In closing the special focus session, the Executive Director thanked the four guest speakers for their valuable contributions and underlined the importance of moving from projects to policy work, contributing to a sustainable impact for children. She noted that the session illustrated how changing policies and structures could achieve a much greater and sustainable impact. She underlined the importance of a legal structure to implement policies,

noting that there had been a lot of discussion about laws implemented or passed by various parliaments and legislative bodies, but implementation of those laws required working at the community level. This was true, for example, in enforcing laws on violence against women. She emphasized the importance of working with partners to achieve improved child outcomes, and mentioned that UNICEF was currently undertaking a Global Study on Child Poverty and Disparities in more than 40 countries. This study would examine gender disparities in realizing the Millennium Development Goals and policies to achieve children's rights.

N. Action on outstanding draft decisions

359. The Executive Board adopted 11 draft decisions at the session (see annex).

O. Closing statements

360. The Executive Director noted that several common themes in the discussions at the Executive Board session had highlighted some of the key areas of the strategic direction of UNICEF. One such strategic area was moving from projects to upstream work, which was mentioned in the discussions of the country programmes, the midterm review of the MTSP and the special focus session.

361. The second overarching theme was UNICEF collaboration with middle-income countries, which was strategically linked with upstream work and project advocacy. The extensive discussions revealed the importance of continuing to review the organization's engagement with middle-income countries.

362. A third key area was the importance of the research function, including data, learning and knowledge management. The discussions on the midterm review of the MTSP, on the evaluation function, on the research role of the Innocenti Centre, and during the special session, showed that good research helped UNICEF not only to determine strategic investments but also to advise countries in closing coverage gaps, allowing for more effective and better use of scarce resources.

363. The fourth overarching theme was the importance of transparency, accountability, and efficiency. The theme was evident in the discussions on the regular resource allocations system and particularly on the audit function, and centered on how management could continue to improve accountability and business processes, and foster a culture of continuous improvement in all parts of UNICEF.

364. The fifth theme was the importance of coordinated approaches and working collaboratively. The Executive Director stressed the importance of collaborative work in the area of HIV and AIDS, with UNAIDS as the main coordinating body, noting also the progress made through the Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS campaign. She also noted that the extension of the MTSP allowed UNICEF to harmonize with other agencies and become more coherent with other partners in planning at the country level. All partners had common

objectives in development and humanitarian work, and the better they worked together, the more effectively they would deliver on the results needed.

365. The Executive Director also highlighted the discussions on funding, including the allocation of regular resources, the benefits of thematic funding, the financial estimates for the MTSP, a review of fund-raising and the Private Sector Division, and the key role of the National Committees. She noted that increased investment in staff security was critical to the work of UNICEF.

366. In closing, the Executive Director reflected on the ongoing effects of increasing food and fuel prices for developing countries. She said the Secretary-General's High-Level Task Force on the Global Food Security Crisis, of which she was a member, was concerned that the international community was losing focus on the critical need to address the issue, even though the number of food-insecure people had increased dramatically, to nearly 1 billion. UNICEF continued to work on the issue, including at the country level, in coordination with the World Bank and other international financial institutions. UNICEF remained focused on the most vulnerable children, particularly with regard to malnutrition.

367. The Executive Director also paid tribute to Esther Guluma, Regional Director of West and Central Africa, who was retiring, and introduced her successor, Gianfranco Rotigliano, who was the Representative in Indonesia.

368. The President closed the session by thanking all participants. Noting the cooperative spirit of the discussions, he said that the extension of the medium-term strategic plan would help UNICEF to harmonize with other funds and programmes. He said that the intense discussion on the modified system for regular resource allocation reflected the various interests that had come together in the adoption of a decision that would serve UNICEF well in the future.

369. The President also expressed his gratitude for the special focus session on policy and advocacy for children's rights, saying that it was interesting to hear representatives of different Governments talk so vividly about how they cooperated with UNICEF on the issue. It was also important to take note of the increased thematic funding in this area.

Annex

Decisions adopted by the Executive Board in 2008

2008/1. UNICEF Child Protection Strategy

The Executive Board,

1. *Recognizes* the important work of UNICEF in the field of child protection, and *notes* the work done on the draft "UNICEF Child Protection Strategy" (E/ICEF/2008/5);

2. *Acknowledges* the need for further consultations and to take into account the views of Member States in order to finalize the Draft Strategy for consideration by the Executive Board, at the latest by the second regular session of 2008.

First regular session
1 February 2008

2008/2. Biennial support budget for 2008-2009

The Executive Board,

1. *Takes note* of the functions, management results, indicators and resource requirements in the report on the biennial support budget as contained in document E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.1;

2. *Approves* gross resources in the amount of $912.8 million representing the total biennial support budget for 2008-2009 and *notes* that the income estimates of $223 million shall be used to offset the gross appropriation, resulting in estimated "net" appropriation of $689.8 million;

3. *Resolves* that the appropriated amount be used to achieve the results specified in the functions as presented in document E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.1;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to exercise utmost restraint in implementing its proposal for upward reclassifications, with clear justifications in line with International Civil Service Commission standards;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director to include in future budget submissions an annex on budget estimates by cost category for major objects of expenditure, with information on cost efficiencies achieved against targets and indicators therein, and to report on the estimates and efficiency targets in the annual financial reporting;

6. *Notes* the progressive decrease of biennial support budget as a proportion of resources and encourages UNICEF to continue to exercise scrutiny of management costs so as to ensure an even

higher allocation of funds for programmes, and further encourages UNICEF to continue its efforts to bring greater efficiency to its operations;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director, taking into account the views of Member States and in close cooperation with other UN funds and programmes, to continue to harmonise and improve the methodology of results-based budgeting, and requests a briefing, at the second regular session of 2008, on steps taken and progress achieved on budget-related issues, including issues related to indicators, targets and cost classifications of items in results-based budgets;

8. *Reaffirms* decision 2006/7 on UNICEF Cost Recovery and *requests* the Executive Director to take all necessary measures to ensure that regular resources do not subsidize projects funded by other resources;

9. *Approves* the amount of $26.2 million from regular resources for covering the United Nations mandated centrally-shared security costs;

10. *Requests* the Executive Director to present the 2010-2011 biennial support budget for Executive Board approval at the second regular session of 2009.

First regular session
1 February 2008

2008/3. Private Fundraising and Partnerships: 2008 work plan and budget for private fundraising

The Executive Board

1. *Approves* for the fiscal year 1 January to 31 December 2008 budgeted expenditures of $124.3 million as detailed below and summarized in column II of table 7 to document E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.3:

	(In millions of United States dollars)
Commissions – field offices	1.7
Cost of goods delivered	33.4
Fundraising, National Committee Relations and Communication	42.2
Support services expenditure	25.6
Investment funds	21.4
Total expenditures, consolidated	**124.3**

2. *Authorizes* UNICEF:

To incur expenditures as summarized in column II of table 7 to document E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.3 and to increase expenditures up to the level indicated in column III of the same table should the apparent proceeds from fundraising and/or card and gift sales increase to the levels indicated in column III, and accordingly, to reduce expenditures below the level indicated in column II to the extent necessary, should the net proceeds decrease;

To redeploy resources between the various budget lines (as detailed in paragraph 1 above) up to a maximum of 10 per cent of the amounts approved;

To spend an additional amount between Executive Board sessions, when necessary, up to the amount caused by currency fluctuations, to implement the 2008 approved work plan.

A. Budgeted income for the 2008 season

The Executive Board

Notes that for the period 1 January to 31 December 2008, Private Fundraising and Partnerships net proceeds are budgeted at $519.6 million (regular resources) as shown in column II of table 7 in document E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.3.

B. Policy issues

The Executive Board

1. *Renews* investment funds with $21.4 million established for 2008;

2. *Authorizes* UNICEF to incur expenditures in the 2008 fiscal period related to the cost of goods delivered (production/purchase of raw materials, cards and other products) for the 2009 fiscal year up to $34.1 million as indicated in the Private Fundraising and Partnerships medium-term fundraising plan (see table 6 of document E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.3);

3. *Approves* an interim one-month allocation for January 2009 in the amount of $11.0 million, to be absorbed in the annual Private Fundraising and Partnerships budget for 2009.

C. Medium-term plan

The Executive Board

Approves the Private Fundraising and Partnerships medium-term fundraising plan as reflected in table 6 to document E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.3.

First regular session
1 February 2008

2008/4. UNICEF evaluation policy

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the establishment of the evaluation policy contained in document E/ICEF/2008/4 as an important step towards creating a common institutional basis for further improving accountability, transparency, and programmatic effectiveness;

2. *Calls on* UNICEF to continue to conduct evaluations of operations at the country level in close consultation with national Governments and to assist Governments in the development of national evaluation capacities;

3. *Approves* the UNICEF Evaluation Policy as presented in document E/ICEF/2008/4, and *notes* that the mandate of the evaluation function is to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF programmes and results;

4. *Resolves* that the Executive Board provide oversight to the evaluation function;

5. *Requests* the evaluation office to:

(a) Submit a biennial work plan to the Executive Board for information, while bearing in mind the importance of clear linkages between its programme of work and UNICEF's strategic frameworks;

(b) Report annually to the Executive Board on the evaluation function and evaluation findings and recommendations;

6. *Requests* the Executive Director to:

(a) Safeguard the integrity and independence of the evaluation function;

(b) Ensure that the process of appointment of the director of evaluation is done in a fully transparent manner;

(c) Provide adequate resources at global, regional and country levels for evaluation;

(d) Ensure the preparation and availability of management responses for all evaluation reports;

(e) Ensure that evaluation findings and recommendations are systematically incorporated into all relevant policy and strategic documents, including country programme documents;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to submit a review of the "Evaluation Policy" (E/ICEF/2008/4), at the second regular session in 2009.

First regular session
1 February 2008

2008/5. Recommendation for additional regular resources for approved country programmes

The Executive Board

Approves a total of $42.7 million in regular resources for 2008 to fund the approved country programmes of 14 countries, as shown in the table in document E/ICEF/2008/P/L.2, whose regular resources planning levels, based on the modified allocation system and estimated global levels of regular resources for country programmes, are higher than the balance of approved funds for these countries.

Additional regular resources (RR) for 2008
(In United States dollars)

Region/country	*Document E/ICEF/*	*Approved programme duration*	*2008 Planning level*	*2008 RR balance*	*Additional RR to be approved*
West and Central Africa			***(A)***	***(B)***	***(A minus B)***
Benin	2003/P/L.5/Rev.1	2004-2008	5 135 000	4 234 000	901 000
Chad	2005/P/L.32/Rev.1	2006-2010	9 587 000	7 007 799	2 579 202
Côte d'Ivoire	2007/P/L.10	2008	6 920 000	4 903 000	2 017 000
Congo	2003/P/L.6/Rev.1	2004-2008	1 252 000	1 183 000	69 001
Niger	2007/P/L.11	2008	18 816 000	14 354 000	4 462 000
Nigeria	2007/P/L.12	2008	42 489 000	29 303 000	13 186 000
Eastern and Southern Africa					
Burundi	2007/P/L.4/Rev.1	2008	8 675 000	6 973 000	1 702 000
Kenya	2003/P/L.2/Rev.1	2004-2008	9 171 000	6 324 999	2 846 001
Mozambique	2006/P/L.4/Rev.1	2007-2009	13 341 000	11 413 000	1 928 000
Uganda	2005/P/L.2/Rev.1	2006-2010	18 965 000	16 498 348	2 466 653
Middle East and North Africa					
Sudan	2007/P/L.27	2008	8 452 000	7 649 000	803 000
Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States					
Uzbekistan	2004/P/L.20/Rev.1	2005-2009	2 990 000	2 600 000	390 001
South Asia					
Afghanistan	2005/P/L.36/Rev.1	2006-2008	33 521 000	26 257 000	7 264 001
Pakistan	2003/P/L.12/Rev.1	2004-2008	15 935 000	13 857 000	2 078 001
Total					**42 691 860**

First regular session
1 February 2008

2008/6. Recommendation for approval of additional other resources for approved country programmes

The Executive Board

Approves a total of $246,100,000 in other resources for approved country programmes for the 13 countries listed in the table of document E/ICEF/2008/P/L.3 below for the remaining periods of these programmes, subject to the availability of other resources contributions.

Additional other resources for approved country programmes

(In United States dollars)

Region/Country	*Document E/ICEF/*	*Approved programme duration*	*Approved OR ceiling*	*Additional OR to be approved*	*Total OR ceiling*
			(A)	*(B)*	*(A+B)*
West and Central Africa					
Central Africa Republic	2006/P/L.39/Rev.1	2007-2011	15 000 000	15 000 000	30 000 000
Congo	2003/P/L.6/Rev.1	2004-2008	12 000 000	8 000 000	20 000 000
Mauritania	2002/P/L.7/Add.1	2003-2008	15 000 000	3 000 000	18 000 000
Subtotal				**26**	
Eastern and Southern Africa					
Angola	2003/P/L.1/Rev.1	2005-2008	95 000 000	45 000 000	140 000 000
Mozambique	2006/P/L.4/Rev.1	2007-2009	66 000 000	20 000 000	86 000 000
Uganda	2005/P/L.2/Rev.1	2006-2010	40 000 000	10 000 000	50 000 000
Subtotal				**101**	
Middle East and North Africa					
Islamic Republic of Iran	2004/P/L.21/Rev.1	2005-2009	6 500 000	2 500 000	9 000 000
Subtotal				**603**	
Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States					
Kyrgyzstan	2004/P/L.14/Rev.1	2005-2010	3 000 000	3 000 000	6 000 000
Subtotal				**606**	
Americas and the Caribbean					
Argentina	2004/P/L.6/Rev.1	2005-2009	12 700 000	3 300 000	16 000 000
Ecuador	2003/P/L.9/Rev.1	2004-2008	10 000 000	3 000 000	13 000 000
Uruguay	2004/P/L.6/Rev.1	2005-2009	2 800 000	1 300 000	4 100 000
Subtotal				**1213**	
South Asia					
Afghanistan	2005/P/L.36/Rev.1	2006-2008	126 000 000	42 000 000	168 000 000
Pakistan	2003/P/L.12/Rev.1	2004-2008	65 000 000	90 000 000	155 000 000
Subtotal				**1345**	
Total				**246 100 000**	

First regular session
1 February 2008

2008/7. Intercountry programmes

Decision 1

Regular resources programme budget estimates for the 2008-2009 biennium

The Executive Board

Decides:

(a) That a regular resources programme budget of $28,750,000 (other than the Emergency Programme Fund) is approved for 2008-2009 as per the following details and as reflected in the document E/ICEF/2008/P/L.1 and Corr.1:

(In thousands of United States dollars)

Headquarters Offices	
Human Resources	-
Communication	5 700
Policy and Practice	3 650
Office of Emergency Programmes	1 050
Evaluation Office	1 900
Private Fundraising and Partnerships (Geneva and NY)	600
Public Alliances and Resource Mobilization Office (NY, Brussels, Tokyo)	100
Executive Office	600
Programme	4 100
Office of Research	1 200
Supply	1 000
Subtotal	**19 900**
Regional offices	
Eastern and Southern Africa	1 500
West and Central Africa	1 500
Americas and the Caribbean	950
East Asia and the Pacific	1 500
South Asia	950
Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States	1 500
Middle East and North Africa	950
Subtotal	**8 850**
Total	**28 750**

(b) That UNICEF is authorized to administer the funds in the most efficient manner under the provision for each of the funds. UNICEF may, without further authorization from the Executive

Board, transfer, if necessary, between the programme fields an amount not exceeding 10 per cent of the approved budget of the fund to which the transfer is made.

Decision 2

Other resources-funded programme budget estimates for the 2008-2009 biennium

1. It is recommended that the Executive Board adopt the following draft decision on other resources-funded programme budget estimates for the 2008-2009 biennium for programme activities at headquarters and regional offices and for intercountry programmes:

The Executive Board

Decides:

(a) That a programme budget ceiling of $456,826,000 for other resources is approved for the 2008-2009 biennium, subject to the availability of specific-purpose contributions, as follows:

(In thousands of United States dollars)

Headquarters	134 200
Regional offices	162 626
Intercountry programmes	160 000
Total	**456 826**

(b) That for the biennium 2008-2009, a total recommendation of $456,826,000 for other resources funding is approved. If necessary, funds in excess of indicated amounts for specific programme areas and regions can be received provided that the total amount of funds received is within the approved limit.

First regular session
1 February 2008

2008/8. Draft country programme documents

(documents E/ICEF/2008/P/L.4 – E/ICEF/2008/P/L.12 and Corr.1)

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budget for the following country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2008/*
West and Central Africa				
Benin	2009-2013	23 107 500	36 900 000	P/L.4 & Corr.1
Republic of Congo	2009-2013	5 634 000	25 000 000	P/L.5
Niger	2009-2013	84 672 000	80 000 000	P/L.6
Nigeria	2009-2012	152 960 400	302 690 000	P/L.7 & Corr.1
The Americas and the Caribbean				
Ecuador	2009	690 300	5 000 000	P/L.8
Guatemala	2009	801 900	4 619 500	P/L.9 & Corr.1
South Asia				
Afghanistan	2009	30 168 900	60 884 000	P/L.10 & Corr.1
Pakistan	2009-2010	28 683 000	86 700 000	P/L.11
Middle East and North Africa				
Sudan	2009-2012	30 427 000	240 000 000	P/L.12 & Corr.1

Annual session
5 June 2008

2008/9. Recommendation for approval of additional other resources for approved country programmes

The Executive Board

Approves a total of $251,230,000 in other resources for approved country programmes for the 27 countries listed in the table below (document E/ICEF/2008/P/L.13) for the remaining periods of these programmes, subject to the availability of other resources contributions.

Proposed increases to other resources (OR) ceilings for approved country programmes for 2008

(In United States dollars)

Region/Country	*Document E/ICEF/*	*Programme duration*	*Approved OR ceiling*	*OR allotments to date*	*Additional OR to be approved*	*Total OR ceiling*
Eastern and Southern Africa			*(A)*		*(B)*	*(A+B)*
Botswana	2007/P/L.40	2008-2009	4 000 000	3 188 870	2 000 000	6 000 000
Burundi	2007/P/L.4	2008-2008	7 930 000	8 975 500	6 570 000	14 500 000
Namibia	2005/P/L.1 and Corr.1	2006-2010	21 665 000	7 241 000	6 000 000	27 665 000
Somalia	2007/P/L.39	2008-2009	48 000 000	29 035 760	12 000 000	60 000 000
Swaziland	2005/P/L.30 and Corr.1	2006-2010	21 250 000	17 908 730	15 000 000	36 250 000
West and Central Africa						
Burkina Faso	2005/P/L.3	2006-2010	40 500 000	17 915 240	20 000 000	60 500 000
Côte d'Ivoire	2007/P/L.10	2008	15 000 000	17 260 500	14 000 000	29 000 000
Gabon	2006/P/L.8	2007-2011	4 160 000	1 826 750	5 050 000	9 210 000
Mauritania	2002/P/L.7	2003-2008	18 000 000	15 145 450	3 000 000	21 000 000
Nigeria	2007/P/L.12	2008-2008	49 000 000	53 385 430	17 500 000	66 500 000
The Americas and the Caribbean						
Haiti	2007/P/L.50	2008	12 200 000	10 077 000	4 950 000	17 150 000
Honduras	2006/P/L.47	2007-2011	9 745 000	4 949 660	14 000 000	23 745 000
Venezuela (Bolivarian Rep. of)	2007/P/L.48	2008	1 890 000	2 411 320	1 900 000	3 790 000
Central and Eastern Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States						
Albania	2005/P/L.13	2006-2010	12 000 000	10 181 580	4 500 000	16 500 000
Armenia	2004/P/L.10	2005-2009	5 069 000	4 190 385	1 000 000	6 069 000
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2004/P/L.12/Rev.1	2005-2008	13 000 000	10 312 170	2 000 000	15 000 000
Georgia	2005/P/L.16	2006-2010	6 000 000	5 788 774	4 000 000	10 000 000
Montenegro	2006/P/L.60	2007-2009	2 000 000	1 176 400	1 000 000	3 000 000
Romania	2004/P/L.15	2005-2009	11 615 000	8 634 700	3 385 000	15 000 000
Turkey	2005/P/L.18	2006-2010	25 000 000	15 891 170	15 000 000	40 000 000
East Asia and Pacific						
Cambodia	2005/P/L.7	2006-2010	68 970 000	60 406 340	4 940 000	73 910 000
China	2005 P/L.8	2006-2010	40 000 000	31 294 590	42 000 000	82 000 000
Myanmar	2005/P/L.9	2006-2010	65 000 000	58 162 500	28 000 000	93 000 000
Timor-Leste	2007/P/L.18	2008	10 000 000	9 856 650	11 000 000	21 000 000
South Asia					5029	
Maldives	2007/P/L.21	2008-2010	3 000 000	785 853	1 784 000	4 784 000
Middle East and North Africa						
Iran (Islamic Rep. of)	2004/P/L.21	2005-2009	9 000 000	9 158 000	4 780 000	13 780 000
Morocco	2006/P/L.21	2007-2011	11 000 000	9 415 623	5 871 000	16 871 000
Total increase					**251 230 000**	

Annual session
5 June 2008

2008/10. Evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF: planned follow-up action

The Executive Board

1. *Reaffirms* gender equality as one of the cross-cutting strategies of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) of UNICEF;

2. *Recognizes* the importance of periodic evaluations of the implementation of policies related to gender equality, one of the cross-cutting strategies of the MTSP, in order to improve performance in this area;

3. *Expresses* concern about the shortcomings identified in the evaluation report;

4. *Requests* UNICEF to present to the Executive Board at its first regular session of 2009 a management response to all recommendations of the Evaluation of gender policy implementation in UNICEF, including actions and timeframes for completion;

5. *Further requests* UNICEF to ensure and track timely implementation of the evaluation recommendations in accordance with the management response, and to develop a tracking and monitoring framework to measure progress in implementation;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to track and monitor both allocations and expenditures for gender equality results, as part of its results-based management approach;

7. *Requests* that the annual report of the Executive Director includes reporting on progress in achieving gender equality results, particularly at the outcome and impact levels, as an integral element.

Annual session
5 June 2008

2008/11. Annual report of the Executive Director

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the "Annual Report of the Executive Director: progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan" (MTSP) (E/ICEF/2008/10);

2. *Welcomes* the continued progress made by UNICEF in strengthening strategic focus and partnerships to support accelerated national and international efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and other national and internationally agreed goals for the well-being of children;

3. *Recognizes* that many countries still face challenges in the five focus areas, and in this regard urges UNICEF to continue to strengthen its support to these countries, in particular in developing national capacities, with a view to tackling the remaining challenges;

4. *Appreciates* the overview provided by the annual report of outcomes and results of activities undertaken by UNICEF and its partners in the five focus areas of the MTSP and further *takes note* of the accompanying data companion that provides detailed, updated information on key trends and indicators; and *requests* that this report be presented with the subsequent annual reports of the Executive Director;

5. *Stresses* the importance of the annual report as a key part of UNICEF reporting to the Executive Board on results and outcomes in the implementation of the MTSP, and looks forward to the report at the second regular session of 2008 on the midterm review;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to give high priority in the annual report to providing information and analysis on key challenges in achieving results in each focus area to support acceleration in progress towards critical goals and targets for children, especially in the countries facing the greatest challenges in achieving the goals and targets;

7. *Calls on* UNICEF to continue to improve performance across the Management Performance indicators and *urges* UNICEF to improve the proportion of recruitment of regular and emergency posts completed within 90 days;

8. *Welcomes* the 10 initiatives aimed at improving organizational effectiveness and *requests* UNICEF to provide a conference room paper on the implications and impact of the ongoing 10 initiatives on improving organizational performance at the first regular session of 2009.

Annual session
5 June 2008

2008/12. The UNICEF child protection strategy in support of the medium-term strategic plan

The Executive Board

1. *Reaffirms* the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) as the guiding framework for all areas of UNICEF programming;

2. *Endorses* the 'UNICEF Child Protection Strategy' (E/ICEF/2008/5/Rev.1) as the UNICEF support strategy document for programmes and actions in support of child protection, developed for the implementation of the MTSP;

3. *Requests* the Executive Director to ensure that UNICEF increases its efforts to further develop national capacities to improve outcomes related to child protection, as outlined in this support strategy for the MTSP.

Annual session
5 June 2008

2008/13. Proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2009

The Executive Board

Decides to adopt the proposed programme of work for Executive Board sessions in 2009, subject to revisions as appropriate in the course of the year.

Second regular session
18 September 2008

2008/14. Midterm review of the medium-term strategic plan 2006–2009

The Executive Board

1. *Welcomes* the report on the midterm review of the medium-term strategic plan (MTSP) 2006–2009 (E/ICEF/2008/18), its companion document on the revised annexes to the MTSP (E/ICEF/2008/19) and the background note on the extension of the MTSP 2006–2009 until the end of 2011 (E/ICEF/2008/25), and commends the extensive consultations, performance analysis and evaluation work on which the review was based;

2. *Endorses* the general conclusions of the review, including the adjustments envisaged for the remaining period of the current MTSP and the implications identified for the preparation of the next plan;

3. *Recognizes* the benefits of extending the period of the current MTSP in order to:

(a) align it with the strategic planning cycles of the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Population Fund; and enable the implementation of paragraph 97 of GA resolution 62/208;

(b) enable the secretariat to continue to instil a sense of urgency with regard to cooperation and partnerships for the Millennium Development Goals, the Millennium Declaration and other internationally agreed goals, rather than having to move immediately after the 2008 midterm review of the current MTSP to a further major planning exercise for a new medium-term strategic plan; and

(c) ensure that the subsequent UNICEF strategic planning cycle, covering the period from 2012 to 2015, will be aligned with the target date for the Millennium Development Goals;

4. *Welcomes* UNICEF's commitment to continuously improve the MTSP specific integrated monitoring framework and *calls on* UNICEF to develop indicators that are measurable, achievable, results-oriented and time-bound for both focus areas and cross-cutting strategies and that are underpinned by verifiable data, to be added to the monitoring framework;

5. *Decides* to extend the period of the current MTSP by two years, until the end of 2011;

6. *Requests* UNICEF to ensure that any implication at the field level of the extension of the MTSP and of its adjustments are implemented in a coordinated manner with the relevant authorities of each country, and are consistent with the current country programme documents and the current United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks adopted in the respective countries;

7. *Requests* the Executive Director to include in the annual report at the annual session in 2010 an account of performance and results of the MTSP to date and *looks forward* to a discussion on the end-of-cycle review of the extended MTSP at the first regular session of 2011.

Second regular session
18 September 2008

2008/15. Report on implementation of the "modified system for allocation of regular resources for programmes" approved by the Executive Board in 1997

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the report on implementation of the 'modified system for allocation of regular resources for programmes', as contained in document E/ICEF/2008/20, and endorses it;

2. *Reaffirms* its determination to continue to give highest priority to the needs of children in the low-income countries, in particular the Least Developed Countries and those in Sub-Saharan Africa in line with the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolutions;

3. *Recalls* its decision 1997/18 and *decides* to maintain the system for allocation of regular resources for programmes of cooperation as endorsed by the Executive Board in that decision, with the following modifications:

(a) Allocations of UNICEF regular resources for country programme cooperation, except for countries included in multi-country programmes, will continue until a country achieves 'high income' status (based on World Bank current data and definitions) and maintains such status for two consecutive years after achieving it;

(b) UNICEF will *increase* regular resource allocations from a minimum annual level of $600,000 established in decision 1997/18 to $750,000 for all programme countries, including those in the 'upper middle-income' country category (based on World Bank current data and definitions), except in those countries otherwise included in the multi-country programmes;

4. *Requests* that a summary computation of regular resources planning levels be provided from 2009;

5. *Recalls* UNICEF's normative promotion and policy responsibilities related to the rights and welfare of the child and *stresses* that the purpose of this revised regular resource allocation is, inter alia, to enable, taking into account document E/ICEF/2008/20, a more strategic dialogue with programme countries on the nature of UNICEF's engagement with those countries in order to enhance the cooperation frameworks reflected in relevant country programme documents presented to the Executive Board for approval;

6. *Requests* that progress and developments in the implementation of the regular resource allocation system and its implications for UNICEF's cooperation with programme countries continue to be monitored and reviewed, and *looks forward* to a report on implementation thereof at its second regular session of 2012.

Second regular session
18 September 2008

2008/16. Draft country programme documents

The Executive Board

Approves the aggregate indicative budget for the following country programmes of cooperation:

Region/country	*Period*	*Regular resources*	*Other resources*	*Document E/ICEF/2008/*
Eastern and Southern Africa				
Angola	2009-2013	34 500 500	122 000 000	P/L.18
Burundi	2009	7 807 500	12 532 000	P/L.19
Kenya	2009-2013	41 269 500	163 750 000	P/L.20 and Corr.1
West and Central Africa				
Côte d'Ivoire	2009-2013	31 140 000	110 000 000	P/L.21
Mauritania	2009-2010	3 247 200	14 500 000	P/L.22
The Americas and the Caribbean				
Haiti	2009-2011	8 164 800	51 450 000	P/L.23
Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of)	2009-2013	2 700 000	8 190 000	P/L.24 and Corr.1
CEE and CIS				
Bosnia and Herzegovina	2009	600 000	3 500 000	P/L.25
East Asia and the Pacific				
Timor-Leste	2009-2013	5 063 000	55 000 000	P/L.26
Middle East and North Africa				
Lebanon	2009	600 000	2 000 000	P/L.27 and Corr.1

Second regular session
18 September 2008

2008/17. UNICEF draft country programme documents

The Executive Board

1. *Having considered* the draft country programme documents presented to the Executive Board at its second regular session 2008;

2. *Acknowledges* that systems are in place within UNICEF to capture programme data, including data on activities, costs and results;

3. *Requests* the UNICEF Executive Director to ensure that country programme results and performance data consolidated over the programme duration are made available on the UNICEF website at the end of the country programme cycle;

4. *Recalling* its decisions 2002/4 and 2006/19 on the review of the country programme approval process, *urges* UNICEF to increase its efforts to present draft country programme documents for discussion at the annual session of the Executive Board and *requests* UNICEF to provide at the annual session a short explanation of the reasons for the deferment of draft country programme documents to the second regular session.

Second regular session
18 September 2008

2008/18. Recommendation for approval of additional regular resources for approved country programmes

The Executive Board

Approves a total of $98,064,270 in regular resources to fund the approved country programmes of the 24 countries (shown in the table to document E/ICEF/2008/P/L.28) for 2009, whose regular resources planning levels, based on the modified allocation system and estimated global levels of programmable regular resources, are higher than the levels originally approved by the Executive Board.

Additional regular resources (RR) 2009
(In United States dollars)

Region/country	*Document E/ICEF/*	*Approved programme duration*	*2009 Planning level*	*2009 RR Balance*	*Additional RR to be approved*
			(A)	*(B)*	*(A-B)*
West and Central Africa					
Chad	2005/P/L.32/Rev.1	2006-2010	9 587 000	0	9 587 000
Ghana	2005/P/L.4/Rev.1	2006-2010	7 176 000	1 885 095	5 290 906
Guinea	2006/P/L.9/Rev.1	2007-2011	6 426 000	5 359 000	1 067 000
Burkina Faso	2005/P/L.3/Rev.1	2006-2010	13 022 000	3 247 291	9 774 710
Subtotal by region					**25 719 616**
Eastern and Southern Africa					
Ethiopia	2006/P/L.2/Rev.1	2007-2011	40 053 000	39 644 000	409 000
Mozambique	2006/P/L.4/Rev.1	2007-2009	13 341 000	0	13 341 000
Uganda	2005/P/L.2/Rev.1	2006-2010	18 965 000	0	18 965 000
United Republic of Tanzania	2006/P/L.37/Rev.1	2007-2010	18 267 000	13 693 000	4 574 000

Zambia	2006/P/L.38/Rev.1	2007-2010	8 204 000	4 250 000	3 954 000
Subtotal by region					**7999**
East Asia and Pacific					
Cambodia	2005/P/L.7/Rev.1	2006-2010	6 506 000	5 373 000	1 133 000
Democratic People's Republic of Korea	2006/P/L.56/Rev.1	2007-2009	1 692 000	511 073	1 180 927
Myanmar	2005/P/L.9/Rev.1	2006-2010	14 795 000	3 541 754	11 253 246
Philippines	2004/P/L.9/Rev.1	2005-2009	2 775 000	1 099 000	1 676 000
Subtotal by region					**15 243 173**
Central and Eastern Europe and Commonwealth of Independent States					
Armenia	2004/P/L.10/Rev.1	2005-2009	644 000	538 000	106 000
Azerbaijan	2004/P/L.11/Rev.1	2005-2009	995 000	473 000	522 000
Bulgaria	2005/P/L.15/Rev.1	2006-2009	600 000	571 000	29 000
Kazakhstan	2004/P/L.13/Rev.1	2005-2009	934 000	797 000	137 000
Romania	2004/P/L.15/Rev.1	2005-2009	623 000	611 000	12 000
Tajikistan	2004/P/L.17/Rev.1	2005-2009	2 107 000	111 000	1 996 000
Turkmenistan	2004/P/L.19/Rev.1	2005-2009	887 000	764 318	122 683
Uzbekistan	2004/P/L.20/Rev.1	2005-2009	2 990 000	0	2 990 000
Subtotal by region					**5 914 683**
Americas and the Caribbean					
Uruguay[1]	2004/P/L.6/Rev.1	2005-2009	500 000	0	500 000
Subtotal by region					**500 000**
Middle East and North Africa					
Iran, Islamic Republic of	2004/P/L.21/Rev.1	2005-2009	1 557 000	1 406 986	150 014
Subtotal by region					**150 014**
South Asia					
Bangladesh	2005/P/L.12/Rev.1	2006-2010	20 824 000	11 530 216	9 293 784
Subtotal by region					**9 293 784**
Total					**98 064 270**

[1] As part of the proposal for the Southern Cone countries: Argentina, Chile and Uruguay.

Second regular session
18 September 2008

2008/19. UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre: Progress report on the 2006–2008 programme of work and proposal for a one-year extension

The Executive Board,

Recalling its decision 2005/14, authorizing the extension of the programme of the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre for three years (2006–2008), *Further recalling* its decision 2008/2, approving the UNICEF biennial support budget for 2008–2009 and enhancing support to the research function in UNICEF,

Having welcomed and reviewed the progress report on the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and the proposed focus of its activities for 2009 (E/ICEF/2008/23),

1. *Reiterates* that the Innocenti Research Centre remains a vital and central part of UNICEF's research function and *welcomes* the framework for further work for 2009, as contained in E/ICEF/2008/23;

2. *Authorizes* the extension of the Centre's programme until the end of 2009 to ensure its alignment with the UNICEF strategic planning process, with the programme of work for the Office of Research 2010-2011, which will include the activities of the Centre, and with the UNICEF biennial support budget for 2010–2011;

3. *Further authorizes* an increase in the other resources ceiling of $7 million, for a total other resources ceiling of $24 million for the period 2006–2009;

4. *Invites* all donors to contribute to the Centre's programme activities in order to meet the full cost of expenditures foreseen for the implementation of its programme for 2009;

5. *Requests* the Executive Director of UNICEF to inform the Executive Board, through informal consultations in the first half of 2009, on the future direction, focus and details of the organizational arrangements for the research function, in view of the discussions on this function for the preparation of the biennial support budget 2010-2011.

Second regular session
18 September 2008

2008/20. Medium-term strategic plan: planned financial estimates for the period 2008-2011

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the planned financial estimates (E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.5) as a flexible framework for supporting UNICEF programmes;

2. *Approves* the framework of planned financial estimates for 2008-2011 and *approves* the preparation of programme expenditure submissions to the Executive Board of up to $915 million from Regular Resources in 2009, subject to the availability of resources and the continued validity of these planned financial estimates;

3. *Approves* the annual transfer of $30 million to the reserve for after-service health insurance for the period 2010-2011.

Second regular session
18 September 2008

2008/21. Additional United Nations-mandated security measures for UNICEF personnel and premises

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note* of the additional funding requirements of UNICEF for security activities described in this document and presented in the annex to the present report, amounting to $21.4 million;

2. *Approves* the net amount of $21.4 million as an additional requirement from regular resources to cover security measures mandated by the United Nations;

3. *Authorizes* the UNICEF Executive Director on an exceptional basis, during 2008-2009, to access up to an additional 20 per cent ($4.3 million) of the $21.4 million proposed net regular resources earmarked for security measures, mandated by the United Nations. UNICEF will limit the use of those funds to new and emerging security mandates, as defined in the United Nations Department of Safety and Security directives, and will report to the Executive Board on the use of those funds in its annual report of the Executive Director on progress and achievements against the medium-term strategic plan.

Second regular session
18 September 2008

2008/22. Report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. *Recalls* that the mandate of the evaluation function is to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of UNICEF programmes and results;

2. *Takes note* of the report on the evaluation function and major evaluations in UNICEF (E/ICEF/2008/21);

3. *Emphasizes* the importance of the independence and impartiality of the evaluation function within the United Nations system;

4. *Notes* the steps taken and planned by UNICEF to strengthen evaluation at all levels of the organization;

5. *Notes* with concern that a key recurrent finding of the internal audit report is UNICEF's weakness in the prioritization of evaluation and research activities at field level, and in this regard *requests* UNICEF to report back to the Executive Board, in its review of the "Evaluation Policy" at the second regular session in 2009, on measures taken to address this finding as well as on additional steps to further improve the evaluation function;

6. *Recalling its decision* 2008/4, *urges* the Evaluation Office of UNICEF to submit to the Executive Board a biennial work plan for information at its second regular session in 2009, while bearing in mind the importance of clear linkages between its programme of work and UNICEF's strategic frameworks;

7. *Reiterates* the request of the Executive Board (2008/4) to the Executive Director to ensure the preparation and availability of management responses for all evaluation reports;

8. *Emphasizes* that programme countries should have greater ownership and leadership in the evaluation of all forms of assistance, *underlines* the importance of increasing the participation of national counterparts and strengthening national capacity in the evaluation and follow-up of UNICEF country programmes, and *encourages* UNICEF to use national evaluation systems, where available, to continue to incorporate capacity-building mechanisms into programme design and implementation and to ensure that evaluations are responsive to national demand;

9. *Notes* the endorsement in 2005 of the norms and standards for evaluation by the United Nations system through the United Nations Evaluation Group, constituting a contribution to strengthening evaluation as a United Nations system function.

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2008/23. Internal audit: UNICEF

The Executive Board

1. *Takes note of* the UNICEF report on internal audit activities in 2007 (E/ICEF/2008/AB/L.7);

2. *Congratulates* UNICEF on the result of the independent quality assurance review that confirmed a high compliance of the UNICEF Office of Internal Audits with international internal auditing standards and practices;

3. *Welcomes* the further refinement of the UNICEF risk-based audit planning methodology in the internal audit reports *and notes with appreciation* the intention to adopt an organization-wide risk management framework and *requests* UNICEF to report on its preparation in the annual report of internal audit 2009;

4. *Also welcomes* the efforts to harmonize and standardize audit and management ratings with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund, the World Food Programme and the United Nations Office for Project Services, in accordance with Executive Board decision 2006/18;

5. *Requests* UNICEF to closely consult with the Executive Board in the preparation of the accountability framework foreseen for the first regular session 2009, including through presenting a draft of the report prior to the session;

6. *Expresses concern* about the high percentage of unsatisfactory ratings by audited field offices, especially in the areas of programme management, cash assistance and supply assistance which indicate structural weaknesses, and *calls upon* the UNICEF management to immediately address these issues by following up closely with country offices that have unsatisfactory ratings and by implementing measures to strengthen the performance of all country offices in these areas, and *requests* UNICEF to report in summary to the Executive Board at its second regular session 2009 on the measures taken and progress made in this field, as part of the annual report on internal audit activities;

7. *Notes* that within UNICEF mechanisms are in place to track the status of the implementation of audit recommendations and *commends* UNICEF for the high implementation rate of audit recommendations;

8. *Commends* UNICEF for its recent anti-fraud measures and *notes that* these measures have led to increased reporting of alleged misconduct and abuse of authority by staff members, and *requests* UNICEF to report in summary to the Executive Board at its second regular session 2009 on the outcomes of the investigations, as part of the annual report on internal audit activities;

9. *Requests* the UNICEF management to report on progress made and lessons learned in implementing the harmonized approach to cash transfers, including in connection with the development of procedures and reporting mechanisms, in conjunction with the annual report on internal audit at the second regular session in 2009;

10. *Calls upon* UNICEF to present its management response to the annual report of internal audit as an official document for consideration by the Executive Board.

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